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Saipan Tribune

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'Initiatives will mortgage our children's futures' PAGE 2

Delayed action on alcohol tasting law assailed. PAGE 3

Japan arrivals up, Korea down

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

The CNMI's tourism industry is seeing a slow but steady recovery after a recent slump, with this July showing a 4.3 percent increase in traveler arrivals over last year's, including a spike in Japanese visitors. Yet for the first time in 2008, Korean tourism has dropped, the Marianas Visitors Authority reported Saturday.

JULY ARRIVALS	2007	2008	INCREASE
Japan	15,529	19,012	22%
Korea	10,901	10,208	-6%
China	4,107	1,749	-57%
Guam	1,490	1,756	18%
United States	684	1,097	60%
Philippines	516	171	-67%
Russia	294	787	168%
Taiwan	22	50	127%
Others	261	429	64%
TOTAL	33,804	35,259	4.3%

The decline in Korean tourism, down 6 percent from 10,901 visitors in July 2007 to 10,208 this past month, comes as Asiana Airlines is poised to boost its service to the CNMI.

In a statement Saturday, MVA attributed the drop to "unstable" conditions and "signs of stagnation" in the Korean economy, pointing to a trend of low consumer spending there that has taken its toll on the travel industry.

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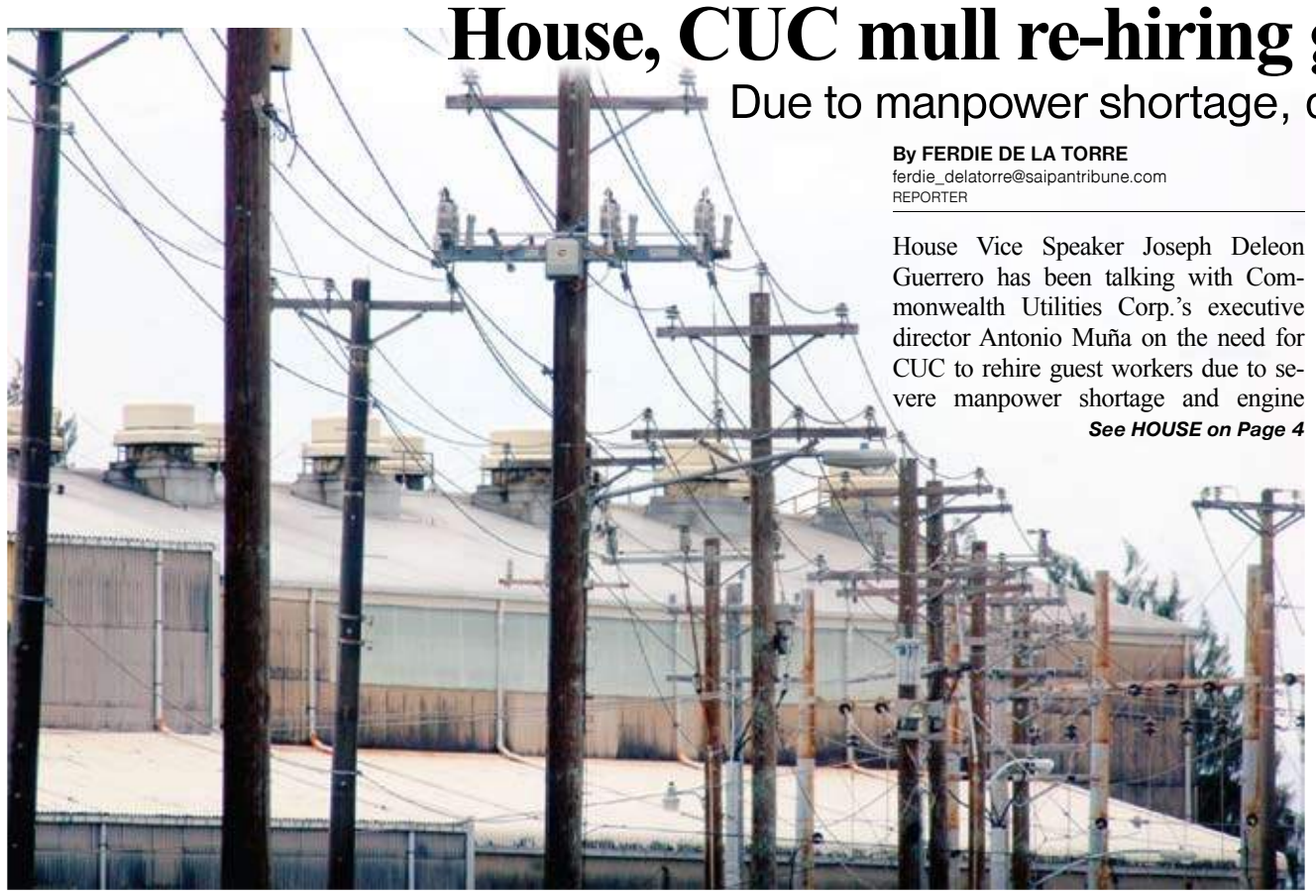
House, CUC mull re-hiring guest workers

Due to manpower shortage, daily engine problems



By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

House Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero has been talking with Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s executive director Antonio Muña on the need for CUC to rehire guest workers due to severe manpower shortage and engine

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Deleon Guerrero

Muna

"Their current staff [at Power Plant 1] are basically getting burned out. When you lack manpower, you make people go on overtime and that's a cost itself."

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s power plant generation facility in Lower Base.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Lawmakers question 'policy shift' at Labor

Sablan

Salas

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

House lawmakers are probing the CNMI Department of Labor on scores of key issues linked to the regulation of the local alien workforce, raising serious questions in a letter delivered Friday on the department's enforcement of labor rules and its treatment of foreign workers who are the parents of disabled children.

The letter's release came on the same day as a statement by Deputy Labor Secretary Cinta Kaipat pointing to recent media coverage applauding labor policies protecting foreign workers in a U.S. mainland county that mirror those of the CNMI.

Reps. Tina Sablan (I-Saipan) and Edward Salas (R-Saipan), in a letter to La-

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POLL RESULTS

Do you pay attention to where your food comes from?

Yes-63

No-18

Sometimes-20

Sunday, August 10, 2008

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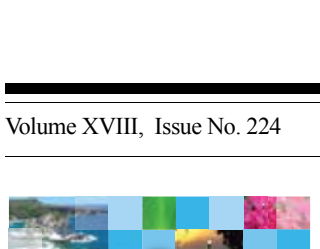

Father Stabbed
The father of a former Olympian is fatally stabbed at a Beijing landmark.

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State of War
Russia and Georgia head toward a wider war as Russian tanks rumble into South Ossetia.

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Bernie Mac, 50
Actor-comedian Bernie Mac died Saturday at age 50.

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Local

CHAMBER REJECTS 2 INITIATIVES ON PENSION BONDS

'Initiatives will mortgage our children's futures'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has urged the Legislature to reject two legislative initiatives that seek to permit the issuance of pension obligation bonds and authorize the Commonwealth to issue such bonds.

Chamber president James T. Arenovski said if these initiatives are passed, they fear the community will stop searching for the right solutions to problems and instead rely on easy solutions.

"An overall concern of the Chamber is that the authorization of public indebtedness of this sort will open a Pandora's box: We are facing a utilities crisis—couldn't the issuance of additional bonds help solve that problem as well?" asked Arenovski in the Chamber's comment to House Legislative Initiatives 16-12 and 16-14.

Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider introduced the two initiatives. H.L.I. 16-12 seeks to amend Article X of the NMI Constitution to permit the issuance of pension obligation bonds. H.L.I. 16-14 on the other hand, seeks to add a new provision to Article X of the NMI Constitution to authorize the Commonwealth to issue such pension obligation bonds.

In a letter to House Standing Committee on Ways and Means chair Rep. Ray N. Yumul and vice chair Rep. Victor B. Hocog, Arenovski said the Chamber's government relations committee—chaired by Alex Sablan and Mike Johnson—has reviewed and discussed the initiatives.

Arenovski said the Chamber disagrees with the specific intentions of the initiatives to authorize public indebtedness in excess of the amount currently authorized by the NMI Constitution and authorize public indebtedness for operating expenses.

Arenovski

The Chamber president said their opposition to these initiatives is not an objection to the goal of repairing the Retirement Fund, which they believe must occur.

"It is the specific means, contained in these initiatives, to that end which we cannot endorse," Arenovski stressed.

He cited the outline in the findings of H.L.I. 16-12 that stated the Fund's current financial crisis has been brought about primarily through the Legislature's approval of many—and significant—increases in benefits and the corresponding approval of decrease in sources and amounts of revenue.

"While these initiatives seem to promise an easy solution to a long-standing and serious problem, we do not believe that the correct solution should necessarily be easy," he said.

Inasmuch as the vast majority of dollars needed in any solution—including for the repayment of bond debt—will come from the private sector, Arenovski said the Chamber thinks the Legislature and past and future retirees should bear some of the burden.

The Chamber chief said that, while they believe recent Fund board members have been working diligently to address the issues facing the Fund, it is not clear that recent Legislatures have accepted their responsibilities in this regard.

He said there are options that the group thinks would significantly improve the long-term outlook for the Fund without necessitating the kind of drastic measures proposed by these initiatives.

One option, Arenovski said, is that, while the Constitution mandates that "accrued benefits of this [retirement] system shall be neither diminished nor impaired," it does seem to allow a prospective reduction in benefits.

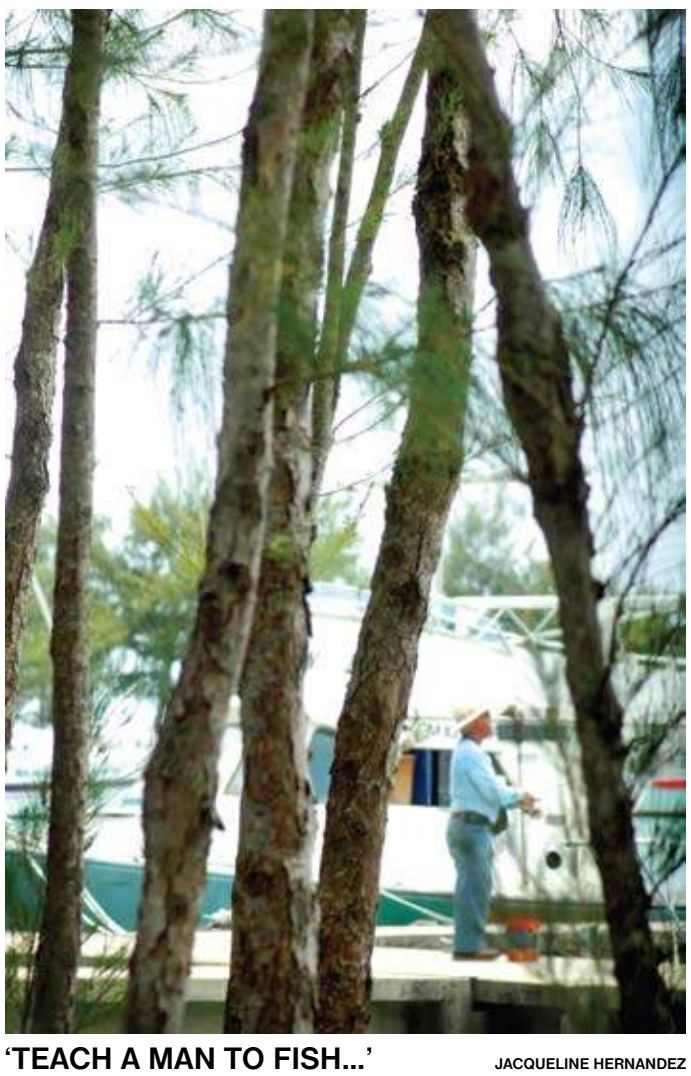
"While this might be wildly unpopular among your constituencies, it also might allow the Fund to survive without saddling the government with enormous long-term debt. This sort of action would only require legislative fortitude—it wouldn't require voter approval," he said.

Going one step further, Arenovski added, since the initiatives will be asking all residents to mortgage their children's futures, perhaps the public should first be asked whether the accrued benefits language of the Constitution should be considered.

This is to be done, he said, so that some of the excessively generous and expensive benefits conferred by the Legislature in the past might be reduced to a level commensurate with the Commonwealth's fiscal abilities.

"While this will certainly meet with disfavor among those who are currently benefit=ing from the largesse of previous legislatures, if it is framed as a choice between reduced benefits or no benefits (as would be the case if the Fund is bankrupt), reduced

See INITIATIVES on Page 4



'TEACH A MAN TO FISH...' JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
A man tries his luck fishing at the Outer Cove Marina yesterday afternoon.

Catlett quits as House legal counsel

The House of Representatives is looking for a lawyer to fill up the position that will be vacated by attorney Ian Catlett this month.

At present, the House has three lawyers—Catlett, Joe Bermudes, and Antonette Villagomez.

"The position that Mr. Ian Catlett is occupying at the moment will be the one that will be vacant," according to Floor Leader Joseph James N. Camacho on Friday.

Interested lawyers have until Aug. 15 to submit their applications to the Legislative Bureau.

"I don't know how many people already submitted for the position," Camacho said.

He said Catlett did not specify the reason why he is quitting.

Catlett used to work as a prosecutor at the Attorney General's Office handling immigration matters. He quit in the latter part of 2006 and moved to the House as legal counsel.

The Senate has two legal counsels—Mike Ernest and Anthony Cabrera. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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JOB VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening date: August 1, 2008 Closing date: August 14, 2008

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) announces the following job vacancies for Saipan:

1-Accountant-Ill
8-Ports Police Trainees
5-ARFF Trainees (Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighters)
2-Ground Maintenance-I

Detailed information on minimum qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form during regular working hours at the CPA's Office (2nd Floor) of the Saipan International Airport, Arrival Wing, or may be downloaded by visiting CPA's website at www.cpa.gov.mp.

All applications must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official transcripts, original copy of recent police record, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 26 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. Failure to provide any of the required documents may result in automatic disqualification. Pre-qualified applicants for the Ports Police and ARFF Trainee vacancies must undergo and pass the physical fitness test as prerequisite for interview and selection process. Only selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening. The deadline for submission of applications is no later than 4:30 p.m., August 14, 2008.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

/s/ LEE C. CABRERA
Acting Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 50514, SAIPAN, MP 96950
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

PUBLIC NOTICE
LOT IN TATGUA, ROTA FOR SALE OR LEASE

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation wishes to inform the general public of the sale or lease of Lot No. 257 R 35 located in Tatgua, Rota, more particularly described as follows:

Lot No. 257 R 35 containing an area of 750 square meters, more or less, more particularly described on the Division of Lands and Surveys Official Cadastral Plat Number 257 R 03, dated October 17, 1995, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 95-2671, dated October 20, 1995, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Interested firms of individuals are encouraged to submit their sealed offers to purchase or lease, addressed to Mr. Manuel A. Sablan, Chairman of the Board, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950. All offers to purchase or lease said property must be sealed and must be received no later than August 18, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. All bids received from outside the Commonwealth must be postmarked by August 18, 2008 and must be received no later than August 27, 2008 by 4:00 p.m. at which time all offers received will be opened and reviewed by NMHC. Off-island bidders must notify the NMHC Corporate Director in writing (by any mode of written communication including facsimile or other electronic transmission) of their intent to bid in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual bid documents. Minimum bid shall not be less than $40,000.00. All other bids, including untimely sealed bids will be rejected.

NMHC reserves the right to reject any and all offers received in the best interest of NMHC.

A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the offered purchase price must be paid by the winning bidder if the NMHC notifies the same of his, her or their selection. Payment must be received no later than August 28, 2008 by 4:00 p.m. The remaining balance of the offered purchase price shall then be due within ten (10) calendar days of said notification. Failure to make payment of the immediate deposit or the remaining balance within ten (10) calendar days will result in forfeiture by the winning bidder of his, her or their ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of said bidder's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will automatically revert to NMHC.

Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property. The interests of NMHC in the property are being sold AS IS and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property or any related documents will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

Inquiries may be directed to Mr. Joshua T. Sasamoto, Corporate Director, at 234-6866/7689 for more information.

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 50514, SAIPAN, MP 96950
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

Edward M. Ayuyu, ("Trustor"), on or about September 17, 2001 gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs, United States of America, ("VA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on September 17, 2001 under Document No. 01-1942 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the VA.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NO. 345 R 426, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 929 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED ON DRAWING/CADASTRAL PLAT NO. 345 R 09 DATED SEPTEMBER 25, 1984, COMMONWEALTH RECORDER'S FILE NO. 84-2049, THE DESCRIPTION THEREIN BEING INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default Trustee issued its Notice of Default on July 20, 2006. More than thirty days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2CMC §4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, Trustee will, on August 18, 2008 at 11:00 a.m., at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation's Rota Field Office, Sonton, P.O. Box 527, Rota, MP 96951 under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than $20,000.00, the total amount due under the VA loan plus Trustee's expenses.

The sale shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property of the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. The purchase price shall be payable by cash, certified check or cashier's check and shall be paid within 72 hours from time of sale.

Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

DATED this 15th day of July 2008.

/S/ Joshua T. Sasamoto
Corporate Director, NMHC

Delayed action on alcohol tasting law assailed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Stanley T. Torres has assailed the Department of Commerce for reportedly not implementing the rules and regulations on alcoholic beverage sampling, which should have generated revenue for the government.

Commerce's excuse, Torres said, was that they already gave the draft of the rules and regulations to the Attorney General's Office and that the department is still waiting for the AG's response.

"But that was in April [2008]. Maybe the AG is not interested in doing that," the lawmaker, who was the principal author of the law, told the media on Friday.

"I even suggested that if they have difficulty and if the AG cannot do it, I will do it for them," he said.

Torres

Torres' House Bill 15-271 proposed to apply the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act to wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverage sampling.

The bill sought to establish controlled procedures that must be followed when alcohol is offered for free tasting. It also proposed annual sampling fees to be charged manufacturers, bars, and restaurants selling or serving alcohol.

The Legislature passed the bill and it was subsequently signed into Public Law 15-115 in November 2007.

Torres said under the law, Commerce should come up with the rules and regulations in implementing the provisions within 60 days.

At most, the rules and regulations should have been in place by the latter part of February, he said.

"I'm waiting for that because a major distributor of a brand name wine is waiting for that permit so they can have wine tastings," he pointed out.

Torres urged Commerce and the Attorney General's Office to "get their act together."

Last Thursday, Torres wrote to Commerce Secretary James A. Santos to inquire on the status of the rules and regulations. Torres informed Santos that it is his third inquiry on the issue since February 2008.

"It has come to my attention once again that your department has yet to implement the provisions of Public Law 15-115, which provides for Alcoholic Beverage Sampling and Annual Sampling Fee, especially the Wine Tasting Sampling Permit," he said.

The lawmaker said the provision should have been generating revenue had Commerce implemented the rules and regulations to issue permits as of February.

"If you are having difficulty promulgating rules and regulations, let me know and I'll have it ready for your department," Torres told Santos in the letter.

Zoning sets hearing on adult businesses, wind energy

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

The local zoning board will host of public hearing later this month on a series of key regulatory issues, including the fate of new rules for adult businesses and plans to propose standards for privately owned wind energy systems.

In a statement Friday, Zoning Administrator Steve Tilley said the hearing—slated for Aug. 28 at 6pm in the Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe—will address the establishment of a proposed "adult business overlay" along Middle Road and plans to adjust permitting fees, among other related issues. In addition, the public will have a chance to comment on a series of wind energy regulations zoning officials have put forth and hear a presentation on wind energy systems, Tilley said.

The zoning plan for adult businesses such as strip clubs and adult bookstores involves relocating them away from downtown Garapan, where most currently reside, to a section of Middle Road between Sugar King Park and Monsigñor Juan Guerrero Road, according to the plan's text.

In addition, zoning officials have put forth a request for proposals to create a so-called "adult business park," a special district where regulations would allow adult businesses to operate in one concentrated area. The Department of Commerce has already proposed that the now vacant La Fiesta complex, built as a shopping mall, could serve as a location for the park. Commerce said the design of the site would aid in the efforts of local authorities to enforce laws.

Meanwhile, the recently crafted wind energy regulations come as scores of business and homeowners are asking Zoning officials for clearance to construct small wind turbines as a means of offsetting the cost of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s high electric power rates. The proposed rules would regulate issues like the location, height and noise level of wind energy systems.

CHILDREN'S FUN DAY JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Children enjoy the puppet show during the first ever Children's Fun Day at Kilili Pavilion in Susupe Sunday afternoon. The children were treated to food, games, face painting and different kinds of kiddie entertainment.

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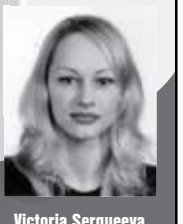
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Bennett accepts decision on COE

Ambrose M. Bennett, the other applicant for the post of Education Commissioner, issued a statement yesterday, congratulating the selection of Rita Sablan and expressing hope that she will be supported in her efforts to improve the Public School System.

"I want to congratulate Mrs. Sablan on her selection," said Bennett in the statement. "She is well qualified to be the COE and I'm confident she will perform well as our Commissioner. I know expectations are high for her and the system and I wish her and all the stakeholders in the system the very best, including myself."

Bennett, a former teacher representative to the Board of Education, accepted the board's decision philosophically, saying, "You don't always get what you ask for and sometimes you have to be careful about what you ask for because you just might get it."

"I have no complaints and I totally respect the decision of the board," he added.

The Board of Education announced its choice of Sablan during a specially scheduled meeting on Saturday.

Board chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita said that Sablan, former PSS associate commissioner for Curriculum and Instruction, was chosen "due to the depth of her knowledge and experience in education as shown by her application packet and interview responses."

The Commissioner of Education reports to the Board of Education and is in charge of all operations for PSS.

In order to take office, Sablan must reach an agreement with the Board over a lawsuit she filed in 2006 against the BOE and three past members. Sablan had sued after David Borja was named COE over her. In June, Borja was dismissed from his post.

Bennett said the Public School System faces many challenges and Sablan needs all the help she can get to move PSS forward.

"The challenges facing our school system are immense and I'm hopeful all the stakeholders in our system will support Mrs. Sablan and her efforts to improve the system. She can't do it alone and it is clear PSS must move on and move forward," he said.

"I will still continue to be an activist for improvements in education system and doing my best to help the new administration in any way that I can," he added.

The Board of Education conducted the 50-question interviews with Sablan and Bennett on Wednesday. Blanco-Maratita said Sablan came out on top with her understanding of the school system.

"Ms. Sablan came ahead, particularly in her development and implementation of standards and benchmarks," she said.

As Commissioner, Sablan will hold the position for four years with annual reviews. She will have a yearly salary of $70,000. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Police chiefs' conference ends

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 6th Annual Police Executives Association Conference went off without a hitch, CNMI Ports Police chief Pius Helgen said.

"It went very, very well and very smoothly," Helgen said. In fact, they made a resolution congratulating and thinking the CNMI for being "a wonderful host."

Helgen said the conference was created to better ensure the safety and security of the community by comparing the different islands of Micronesia, he said.

Some of the topics covered during the three-day conference were human trafficking, U.S. military buildup, regional drug trends and status reports.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial gave a welcome remark on the first day.

Helgen said Guam was chosen as next year's host site. The date has not yet been set.

During Wednesday's portion of the conference, DEA special agent Dan Holcolm said that over the past 10 years there has been a steady increase in "ice" trafficking throughout Micronesia—especially in the CNMI and Guam.

"Predominantly most of the 'ice' that we've seen in this area, CNMI, is coming from mainland China," Holcom said.

However, he noted, Guam and some other areas throughout Micronesia have "ice" being smuggled from the U.S. mainland, the Philippines, Taiwan and Hawaii.

He said the prices of "ice" range from $200 to $400 a gram in Hawaii; $350 to $450 a gram in the CNMI, and $500 to $650 a gram in Guam.

INITIATIVES

From Page 2

benefits might be the palatable alternative," the Chamber president said.

He said there are a number of options to incurring an enormous public liability that will outlast many of the individuals who are debating it.

"These other options must be attempted before the Chamber can support an amendment to the Commonwealth Constitution's restrictions on public debt, which restrictions are likely the only remaining protection from the effective bankruptcy of our government," Arenovski said.

LAWMAKERS

From Page 1

bor Secretary Gil San Nicolas, point to a recent policy change at Labor, among other issues, that directs workers with unpaid administrative orders—rulings that they can collect back wages or other payments from their prior employers—to pursue their case in small claims court rather than through the department.

This policy "appears to shift the burden" of enforcing regulations out of Labor's hands and into those of foreign workers, a change that "unduly burdens victims of labor abuse," the lawmakers say in the letter.

In a previous statement published in the *Saipan Tribune*, Kaipat said this new policy stems from a shortage of staff at the department.

Yet Sablan and Salas nonetheless say this is problematic for workers, and indicates the department is incapable of doing its job. The lawmakers ask Labor to clarify its stance on the issue and for an update on the number of unpaid administrative orders.

"Victims must now not only pay the small claims fee and fill out the necessary small claims forms, they must also serve their claims on the employer who has failed to pay them wages earned and/or failed to follow the orders issued by the Department of Labor," the letter adds. "Moreover, this new policy of referring workers with unpaid awards to small claims court suggests that the department is unable or unwilling to effectively enforce its own orders."

Foreign workers are now preparing a possible class suit against Labor, contending it has failed to fulfill its enforcement duties by foregoing action on administrative orders linked to unpaid claims insurance claims.

Foreign workers with U.S. citizen children, including those who are the parents of children with disabilities, are a further issue in the letter. Labor has said it is crafting so-called "hardship provisions" that could address the needs of foreign workers facing unusual or undue burdens such as those of the parents and the letter urges the department to clarify whether it is granting extended time for those foreign workers to find jobs.

"[F]oreign national workers with U.S. citizen children, including U.S. citizen children having documented physical and mental disabilities, are now being ordered to depart the CNMI, rather than being granted additional time to secure job transfers," the letter says.

"We are concerned that repatriation orders despite circumstances of extreme or unusual hardship, may lead to a greater public burden (i.e., children with disabilities becoming wards of the state) than if foreign national workers petitioning for hardship consideration were simply granted additional time to find new jobs."

Due process concerns are also a prevalent theme in the letter. For example, the lawmakers question why the officers who hear workers' appeals of the department's decisions are often the same ones who denied the original case, a point they asked the department to verify and explain.

The lawmakers also inquired in the letter about some of Kaipat's recent public comments, which they say suggest she harbors a bias against foreign workers.

The letter urges Labor to respond within 10 days.

In contrast to the concerns, Kaipat in an Aug. 8 statement pointed to a report last month in *The Washington Post* on the efforts for domestic workers in Montgomery County, Maryland, to gain better working conditions through a law approved by the county's council mandating their employers give them written contracts, a system the CNMI has long had in place.

"Written contracts for foreign workers have been a staple of Commonwealth law from the beginning," Kaipat said. "We have had written contracts for houseworkers since 1983. We in the Commonwealth are often criticized unjustly because people do not know about the extensive protections our laws provide. Compared to most states, we have far better labor laws protecting foreign workers."

In Maryland, for example, domestic workers are excluded from most federal labor protections such as those that require a safe workplace, a source in the *Post*'s article notes. Yet Kaipat said the CNMI has strong workplace safety rules.

"Commonwealth law mandates safe work places for all foreign workers, and this protection is backed up by inspectors from the Labor Department who inspect the workplaces of all new employers of foreign workers," Kaipat said. "We also do periodic health and safety inspections of workplaces to make sure they meet our standards."

HOUSE

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problems occurring almost daily at the Power Plant 1 in Lower Base.

Deleon Guerrero said the law that caused CUC not renew the contracts of long-time nonresident workers had reduced the number of mechanics, assistants, and technicians at Power Plant 1 alone from 42 down to 24 or 26.

He noted that the Power Plant situation worsened as the manpower shortage was compounded by power engine problems.

"Their current staff [at Power Plant 1] are basically getting burned out," Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*. "When you lack manpower, you make people go on overtime and that's a cost itself."

The vice speaker has been discussing the manpower issue with Muña to see if CUC could justify to the Legislature how to accommodate the manpower shortfall.

"They still have people, but do they have enough people, especially now when almost everyday there is an engine going down?" he asked.

Because of a sunset provision in the law, the contracts of CUC's nonresident employees were not renewed and some of them, like engineers, have contracts that will be expiring in September this year.

Deleon Guerrero said there is a need to revisit the law—at least in the interim until power engines at Power Plant 1 are rehabilitated and power producer Aggreko International comes in.

"We're looking at possibly allowing CUC to hire [guest workers] again if it can demonstrate that they have tried to hire from the resident workforce. But if there is not enough qualified people, then I guess they can justify that," he said.

Deleon Guerrero said he has asked Muña to justify the number of guest workers needed—at least to be able to man the engines at Power Plant 1.

In the case of non-engineers such as technicians, they could be trained but it would take two to three years to get them certified.

"At least for the meantime, in the next year or two, we need to revisit the issue and extend the sunset provision," Deleon Guerrero said.

In September 2007, more than 20 nonresident workers plus six engineers stopped working at CUC after the sunset provision came into effect. Since that time, no law has been passed allowing CUC to keep employing alien workers.

Then CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis told *Saipan Tribune* that they have been asking the Legislature to extend the legal deadline.

The Northern Marianas College does not have an engineering program nor a diesel engine maintenance program.

"With those limitations in the CNMI, plus the expectations for reliable power, it put us in a really tough position," Mathis had said.

In 2005, then governor Juan N. Babauta signed bills into law extending the employment of over a hundred nonresident workers in some government offices, including at CUC, for one to five years. That measure allowed CUC to keep its nonresident engineers and power plant mechanics until Sept. 30, 2007.

JAPAN

From Page 1

"As the consumer sentiment on household spending has been restricted, Koreans are not actively planning for overseas trips," the statement said.

Moreover, major increases in the price of fuel have added to the cost of traveling, MVA said. "The main reason for decline in outbound travel is the increase in the fuel surcharge. For example, a family of four members now has to pay about $1,000 for the fuel surcharge and tax," it said.

However, Japanese tourism saw a 22 percent jump in July over the same month last year. There were 19,012 Japanese visitors last month compared to 15,529 during the same period in 2007. MVA says this is the second highest total of Japanese travelers to reach the CNMI in fiscal year 2008. The top month for Japanese tourism remains January with 20,078 arrivals. MVA credited Northwest Airlines' recent boost in services to the CNMI from Tokyo for the jump. Northwest brought in an additional 298 daily seats from the Japan market.

"The increase in total visitor arrivals is very encouraging for the CNMI tourism industry," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "We are working closely with our travel partners to assure that we can continue to grow visitor arrivals to the CNMI."

Meanwhile, Russian tourism continued to see significant gains in July, up 168 percent over last year, though the total number of Russians visiting the CNMI last month remained relatively low at 787. Last year, the CNMI hosted 294 visitors from Russia.

Philippine tourism saw a major drop, however, down to 171 arrivals in July compared to the 516 seen in the same month last year. MVA noted that since the opening of a testing center in the Philippines for nursing certifications, those figures have rapidly declined. Continental Airlines' cancellation of direct Manila-to-Saipan flights has contributed to this market's demise.

And Chinese tourism, MVA added, is also down 57 percent in July due to a drop in charter flights. Chinese visitors went from 4,107 in 2007 to 1,749 this year.

"In July 2007, there were charter flights from Shanghai and Guangzhou. For this year, we only had charter flights from Guangzhou," MVA said.

BoE chair wants flexibility in setting salaries

To make PSS competitive in hiring teachers, personnel

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI State Board of Education chair Lucia L. Blanco-Maratita has sought the Legislature's help to allow the board to have flexibility in determining salaries so the Public School System could be more competitive in its hiring of staff, especially teachers and special education personnel.

Maratita informed House Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho that a law is needed to allow the Board of Education to remove the salary caps for critical areas.

Maratita discussed the system's recruitment problems after Camacho inquired about an issue raised by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges regarding the current situation at Tanapag Elementary School.

Citing an April 25, 2008, *Saipan Tribune* story, Camacho said that, according to WASC, Tanapag has problems in hiring teachers for students with special needs.

"As a representative of Precinct IV, I would like to know what attempts have been done, along with any progress, to rectify this problem," Camacho wrote to Maratita.

In a July 28 response to Camacho, the board chairperson urged the floor leader to require the CNMI's scholarship programs to provide scholarships in fields that need more people and driven by the labor market, including the dire need for teachers and special education personnel.

Maratita said there is a need to provide additional incentives for those in special education studies and scholarships for advanced degrees.

"We need to have a more directed focus of our funds on training for jobs that we need the most," she pointed out.

Citing a constitutional amendment to the law, Maratita urged Camacho to help PSS lift the prohibition against the re-employment of retired professionals.

She said it would also be helpful to allow PSS the flexibility of giving a contract longer than the current two-year limitation on employment contracts.

This, Maratita said, can let PSS reward effective teachers and realize a return on the recruitment and scholarship investments.

With respect to the WASC report, the Board chairperson said it may have been misinterpreted, in that the issue was not a lack of a special education teacher—as Tanapag school has a special education teacher—but rather a lack of related service providers for the students with special needs.

She said the board recognizes the many challenges facing the Special Education Program and it has, in fact, created a standing committee in order to ensure that the program has a more focused attention toward improving special education.

Maratita said that PSS acknowledges an ongoing challenge to recruit and retain special education related service providers and teachers.

The Human Resources Office, with assistance from the acting special education coordinator, continues to engage in recruitment activities, she said.

"Essentially, we are not attractive enough," said Maratita, citing that majority of the responses to the vacancy announcements are just inquiries and no filing of applications.

To address the problem, Maratita said the board lifted the salary cap of related service providers to allow for compensation commensurate to verified years of employment.

The board, she said, also approved a pay differential for related service providers to work during off days such as Saturdays and holidays in order to provide services to students who may not have received services during the school year.

Also, Maratita said, the board is considering revising its pay differential scale to be more competitive with U.S. mainland salaries.

"In order to build local capacity with our current staff, and to keep the special education staff current and up to date with what is considered 'best practice' in the field of special education, continuous and ongoing staff development is provided to school personnel and parents," she added.

Camacho told the media on Friday that he would consider Maratita's recommendations, particularly issues that affect the Scholarship Office and retired teachers.

Live-fire training on Farallon

The Emergency Management Office, in conjunction with U.S. Naval Forces Marianas (N3) Guam, is warning the public that the U.S. military would be conducting trainings on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla. The schedule dates and time are as follow:

Aug. 11	from 9am to 7pm	Live fire training
Aug. 12-31	from 12am to 11:59pm	Unexploded ordnance clearance
Sept. 1-12	from 12am to 11:59pm	Unexploded ordnance clearance

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, EMO is advising the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

For more information, contact the EMO's Operations Section at telephone numbers 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. ***(EMO)***

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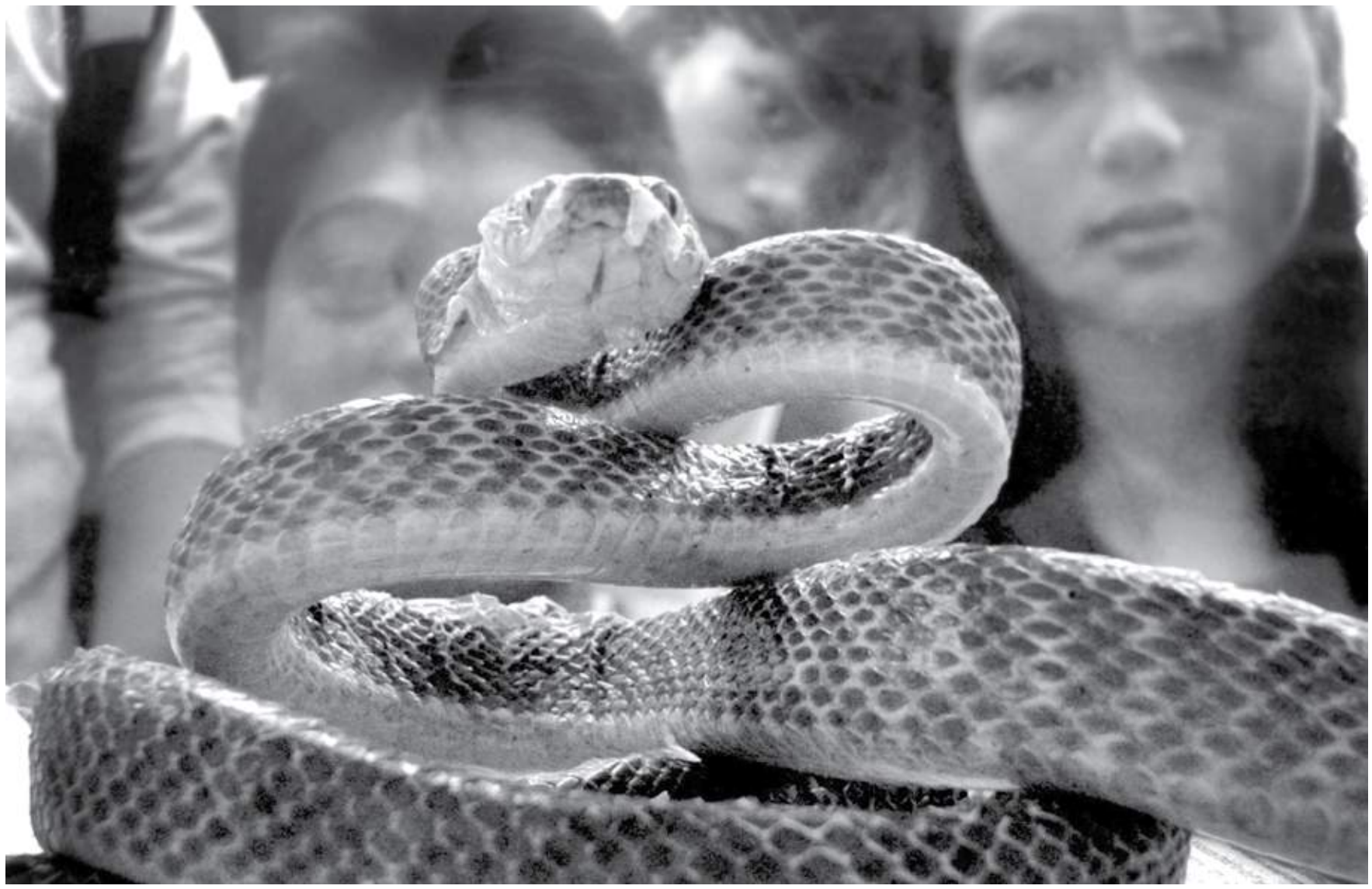
BECAUSE OF THE BROWN TREE SNAKE

Guam could lose more than its birds

New research suggests indirect impacts more far reaching



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

File photo shows students checking out the brown tree snake displayed during the DEQ's Environmental Expo at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe.

In the last 60 years, brown tree snakes have become the embodiment of the bad things that can happen when invasive species are introduced in places where they have few predators. Unchecked for many years, the snakes caused the extinction of nearly every native bird species on the Pacific island of Guam.

A variety of other damage has been directly attributed to brown tree snakes, including large population losses among other native animal species in Guam's forests, attacks on children and pets, and electrical power outages.

But new research by University of Washington biologists suggests that indirect impacts might be even farther reaching, possibly changing tree distributions and reducing native tree populations, altering already damaged ecosystems even further.

"The brown tree snake has often been used as a textbook example for the negative impacts of invasive species, but after the loss of birds no one has looked at the snake's indirect effects," said Haldre Rogers, a UW doctoral student in biology.

"It has been 25 years since the birds disappeared. It seems to me the consequences are going to keep reverberating throughout the community if birds are fundamental components of the forest," she said.

Birds typically make up a small part of the life of a forest, but they are important for pollination, spreading seeds around the forest and controlling insects that feed on plants. Guam, an island 30 miles long and 5 to 15 miles wide about 3,800 miles west of Hawaii, lost most of its native birds after the brown tree snake was introduced by accident from the Admiralty Islands following World War II. The snake has few predators on Guam, so its population density is quite high—estimated at more than 3,000 per square mile—and some individuals there grow to an unusual size of 10 feet long.

Before introduction of the brown tree snake, Guam had 12 species of native forest birds. Today 10 of those are extinct on Guam, and the other two species have fewer than 200 individuals. Though Guam has some non-native bird populations, few other birds moved in when native species died out, and none of them live in the forest. That leaves few birds to consume tree seeds and then drop them away from the trees.

That could have two possible negative impacts on the native forests, Rogers said. First, some plant species need birds to handle their seeds to ensure effective germination. In addition, seed predators and fungi that kill seeds are often found in high density directly beneath a parent tree, so the trees rely on birds to disperse seeds beyond the range of those negative effects. If native birds performed those functions on Guam, tree populations could suffer from the loss of birds. It appears 60 percent to 70 percent of tree species in the native forests are dispersed, at least in part, by birds, she said.

To test the effects of the loss of native birds on seed distribution, Rogers devised seed traps that look a bit like satellite dish receivers, with tubing bent into a circular shape and covered with fine mesh screen-door netting. She set 119 traps beneath and near *Premna obtusifolia*, or false elder, trees on Guam and the nearby island of Saipan, which does not have brown tree snakes. For each tree sampled, she set two traps directly beneath the tree's canopy, two about 3 feet away, three at 16 feet, three at 33 feet and seven at 65 feet.

On Saipan, Rogers and her colleagues found seeds in nearly every trap at each distance, though more seeds were found in closer traps and fewer farther away. However, on Guam the seeds appeared only in traps directly beneath the canopy. What's more, most of the farther-dispersed seeds from traps on Saipan had the seed coats removed, a factor that could speed seedling germination and the growth of new trees and something that likely could only be accomplished in the gut of a bird. None of the seeds found on Guam had seed coats removed.

In addition, the scientists randomly selected points in native forests on Guam, Saipan and two other nearby islands, Tinian and Rota, searching for seedlings of a tree called *Aglaia mariannensis* and each seedling's most likely parent, the closest adult of that species. On Guam all seedlings were found within 16 feet of the nearest adult tree, most within 6 feet. On the other islands the nearest adult trees were found two to three times farther away from the seedlings.

"These findings could have global implications, since forests in areas that have had a decline in bird populations instead of outright extinction might show effects similar to those in the forests of Guam," Rogers said.

She notes that recent studies show bird populations are declining worldwide, and that as many as 25 percent of U.S. species face the threat of extinction.

Rogers presented her data Friday (Aug. 8) at the Ecological Society of America meeting in Milwaukee. Co-authors are Joshua Tewksbury and Janneke Hille Ris Lambers, both UW assistant professors of biology.

Further research, Rogers believes, could turn up other indirect impacts the brown tree snake has had on Guam. For example, she notes anecdotal evidence that there is a substantially higher spider population on Guam than on other nearby islands, and she speculates that could largely be because the native bird population has been decimated.

But the biggest indirect impact, she said, could be altered seed scattering that in turn might, in the near future, transform the remaining forest from a diverse mixture of tree species to clumps of trees of the same species, separated by open space. That could have serious consequences, including extinction, for plant and animal species that still live in the forests.

"It seems logical that if there are no birds then seeds are not able to get away from their parent trees, and that is exactly what our research shows," Rogers said. "The magnitude of difference between seed dispersal on Guam and Saipan is alarming because of its implications for Guam's forests, and for forests worldwide experiencing a decline or complete loss of birds." ***(Newswise)***

Bordallo mourns death of Carbullido

HAGATNA, Guam—Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo issued a statement Saturday upon learning of the death of Petty Officer Second Class Anthony M. Carbullido, USN, in Afghanistan.

"I join the people of Guam in mourning the loss of a son of Guam, Petty Officer Anthony M. Carbullido. We extend our sympathies and prayers to his family, friends and loved ones.

"Petty Officer Carbullido was a hero who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. We share the burden of his loss with his family and we pray that they will be comforted in knowing that our island community will always remember and honor Anthony for his service," said Bordallo.

Carbullido, 25, was a Hospital Corpsman assigned to the Naval Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Ill and performing operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was killed after his convoy hit an improvised explosive device.

A *Pacific Daily News* story said Carbullido was on his second tour of duty, having been previously deployed to Iraq.

His death brings the island's casualties to five this year and is the 29th death from the region since the War on Terror began in 2001, according to PDN.

Carbullido was married to Summer Carbullido, who lives in the couple's home in Chicago. The couple have no children.

In the PDN story, it quoted Carbullido's father, Anthony Carbullido, as saying that the family was notified early Saturday morning.

"Carbullido's father said he was told by a Navy chaplain that an improvised explosive device was involved in his son's death. He said he couldn't recall the exact date the incident happened," the story said.

A special Mass was said Saturday night at Mount Carmel Church in Agat. Services will be announced later, according to the family.

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NOTICE OF HEARINGS PENDING DENIAL APPEALS

FOR AUGUST 07, 08, 14, 15, 21, & 22, 2008

Notice is hereby given to the persons listed below to appear at the Hearing Office, Department of Labor, Second Floor, Afetña Square Building, San Antonio, on the date and at the time listed below. Please bring any documentation necessary to resolve the issues that led to the denial of your permit application. If you fail to appear or fail to bring required documentation, the appeal may be dismissed and an administrative order may be entered against you. Any employee who intends to request permission to transfer to a new employer must appear at the hearing to make that request; failure to appear may result in immediate denial of transfer relief.

Case No.	Employee	Employer	Hearing Date	Time
DC 08-604	Coper, Ricardo D.	3K Corporation	August 15, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-662	Lim, Jin Taik	Air World Corporation	August 7, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-659	Zhang, Fuhua	Air World Corporation	August 7, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-658	Alvaro, Edilberto C.	An Da International Corp.	August 7, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-425	Batusin, Gemma T.	Aranda, Roxanne D.	August 14, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-639	Fajardo, Florisa P.	Atalig, Felipe Q.	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-683	Galla, Alfredo G.	Azucenas, Renato G.	August 21, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-617	Jorda, Veronica J.	Babauta, Susana C.	August 15, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-428	Acupan, Milagros F.	Barit, Antonio M.	August 14, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-427	Barit, Mario M.	Barit, Antonio M.	August 14, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-460	Shen, Ying	Cabrera, Fuyun Ya	August 8, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-675	Santos, Ruben, Jr. C.	Calvo, Edward M.	August 21, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-680	Lebrias, Emilio A.	Camacho, Antonio S.	August 21, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-543	Li, Xiuyuan	Castro, Augustin T.	August 22, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-687	Pinote, Marcelino M.	Castro, Xiao Mei Feng	August 15, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-691	Nishikawa, Koji	Cordy & Company Limited	August 21, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-690	Ocson, Ivony B.	Cordy & Company Limited	August 21, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-689	Villaraiz, Rosana C.	DLGuerrero, Joaquin Pedro A.	August 15, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-635	Kabir, Humaun	Dong Rim Corporation	August 7, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-636	Motaleb, Abdul	Dong Rim Corporation	August 7, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-430	Cabalza, Lucille S.	Dulay, Weena P.	August 14, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-665	Cui, Linhua	Future World Inc.	August 22, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-457	Bocatot, Loida F.	Gariguez, Mariano A.	August 8, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-373	Barce, Abraham J.	HNC Inc.	August 8, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-641	Wang, Meng	Huang Zeng Corporation, Ltd.	August 22, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-642	Yi, Guanghua	Huang Zeng Corporation, Ltd.	August 22, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-177	Lao, Qiongxiao	Hui Huang Saipan, Inc.	August 22, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-673	Huang, Haiyue	J Min Corporation	August 7, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-424	Mendoza, Eliza C.	Jemikach Co., Ltd	August 14, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-672	Li, Ming Hao	Jin Yong Americana Inc.	August 7, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-620	Joo, Young Hoon	Joo Corporation	August 14, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-455	Sanchez, Restituta R.	JRC Corporation	August 8, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-626	Hur, Young Joo	JSSJ Inc.	August 15, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-140	Quan, Zhenyu	JXYZ Corporation	August 8, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-453	Morales, Ariel M.	Kims Corporation	August 8, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-574	Ding, Liqian	Laniyo, Maria Lourdes	August 14, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-445	Abarra, Teofila B.	Larinay, Emmy F.	August 14, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-679	Paras, Virginia A.	Lee Sung Chun	August 21, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-754	Buenicho, Jenelyn T.	Lisua, Alexcia D.	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-798	Mecate, Merlinda M.	Lisua, Ramon & Alexcia	August 22, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-509	Mendoza, Leila O.	Lobrio, Marie Vic M.	August 14, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-423	Lu, Jiaojiao	Luo's Corporation	August 14, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-517	Crisostomo, Pepe R.	Marianas Security Corporation	August 22, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-655	Xu, Guoquan	Micro. Holding Co., LLC	August 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-694	Dioneda, Teresita D.	Micronesia Woodcraft Ent., Inc.	August 21, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-693	Tenorio, Dexter G.	Micronesia Woodcraft Ent., Inc.	August 21, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-696	Pineda, Josefina C.	Micronesian Engine Services	August 14, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-692	Pabale, Rodofo B.	Misamis Construction Spn. Ltd.	August 21, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-695	Buenviaje, Carmen B.	Muna, Arlene A.	August 15, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-614	Tang, Xue	N.G.Li Corporation	August 7, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-404	Sula, Jose C.	Ngeskebei, Dennis J.	August 8, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-697	DLC Cordero, Geraldine C.	Noah Corporation	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-698	Satira, Marjerie R.	Noah Saipan Inc.	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-573	Zhang, Nirong	Optima Karaoke	August 8, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-688	Francisco, Elenita G.	Pacific Creative Network	August 21, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-669	Antiquena, Celbueno L.	Pacific Printing Press Inc.	August 15, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-670	De Guzman, Maribeth C.	Pacific Printing Press Inc.	August 15, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-678	Bantolino, Carlota Alex	PCC Corporation	August 15, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-584	Jeon, Sook Ja Kim	Power Corporation	August 14, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-420	Wu, Li-Hua	Qing Lang Corporation	August 22, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-426	De Guzman, Lorenzo Q.	RVE Enterprises	August 14, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-656	Caintoy, Raquel U.	Sablan, Deverly Davina M.	August 22, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-654	Jing, Yan Li	Sablan, Vicenta M.	August 22, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-205	Sofla, Ronnie D.	Samkor Inc.	August 8, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-407	Zhao, Huimin	Samkor Inc.	August 8, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-643	Ling, Min	SDM Enterprises, Inc.	August 22, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-431	Zhou, Jian	Shun Yi American Corporation	August 14, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-664	Sun, Shuqing	SMZ Corporation	August 22, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-631	Hayag, Veben Jose S.	Soloman, Nicolas M.	August 7, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-632	Nuqui, Bonifacio C.	Soloman, Nicolas M.	August 7, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-629	Onal, Erlyn B.	Soloman, Nicolas M.	August 7, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-633	Tibayan, Roderick C.	Soloman, Nicolas M.	August 7, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-630	Parreno, Roy T.	Solomon, Nicolas M. Jr.	August 7, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-432	Encarnacion, Elsie R.	Sula, Jose C.	August 8, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-676	Du, Chuanhua	Sunleader Co. Ltd.	August 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-677	Li, Xiulan	Sunleader Co. Ltd.	August 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-597	Yan, Jintang	Suxin Guo Edboi	August 15, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-619	Tababa, Michelle Den Sharon L.	Tababa, Dionesio	August 15, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-601	Santiago, Ricardo M.	Teregeyo, Marianne C.	August 15, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-458	Monsanto, Christopher M.	Triple K Corporation	August 8, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-461	De Guzman, Joseph S.	Universal Developers Inc.	August 8, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-681	Hepolio, Henry N.	Wons Corporation	August 7, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-291	Teng, Changwen	Xing Wang Development Corporation	August 15, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-661	Magcalas, Alberto G.	Yuman Construction	August 22, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-660	Macaspac, Noviminda P.	Yumul, Elena M.	August 22, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-657	Li, Na	Yun Feng Corporation	August 22, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-456	Song, Mi Hwa H.	Yuna Corporation, Inc.	August 8, 2008	1:00 p.m.

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NOTICE OF HEARINGS PENDING DENIAL APPEALS

FOR AUGUST 14, 15, 21, & 22, 2008

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Case No.	Employee	Employer	Hearing Date	Time
DC 08-604	Coper, Ricardo D.	3K Corporation	August 15, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-425	Batusin, Gemma T.	Aranda, Roxanne D.	August 14, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-639	Fajardo, Florisa P.	Atalig, Felipe Q.	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-683	Galla, Alfredo G.	Azucenas, Renato G.	August 21, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-617	Jorda, Veronica J.	Babauta, Susana C.	August 15, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-428	Acupan, Milagros F.	Barit, Antonio M.	August 14, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-427	Barit, Mario M.	Barit, Antonio M.	August 14, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-675	Santos, Ruben, Jr. C.	Calvo, Edward M.	August 21, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-680	Lebrias, Emilio A.	Camacho, Antonio S.	August 21, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-543	Li, Xiuyuan	Castro, Augustin T.	August 22, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-687	Pinote, Marcelino M.	Castro, Xiao Mei Feng	August 15, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-691	Nishikawa, Koji	Cordy & Company Limited	August 21, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-690	Ocson, Ivony B.	Cordy & Company Limited	August 21, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-689	Villaraiz, Rosana C.	DLGuerrero, Joaquin Pedro A.	August 15, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-430	Cabalza, Lucille S.	Dulay, Weena P.	August 14, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-665	Cui, Linhua	Future World Inc.	August 22, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-641	Wang, Meng	Huang Zeng Corporation, Ltd.	August 22, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-642	Yi, Guanghua	Huang Zeng Corporation, Ltd.	August 22, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-177	Lao, Qiongxiao	Hui Huang Saipan, Inc.	August 22, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-424	Mendoza, Eliza C.	Jemikach Co., Ltd	August 14, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-620	Joo, Young Hoon	Joo Corporation	August 14, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-626	Hur, Young Joo	JSSJ Inc.	August 15, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-574	Ding, Liqian	Laniyo, Maria Lourdes	August 14, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-445	Abarra, Teofila B.	Larinay, Emmy F.	August 14, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-679	Paras, Virginia A.	Lee Sung Chun	August 21, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-754	Buenicho, Jenelyn T.	Lisua, Alexcia D.	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-798	Mecate, Merlinda M.	Lisua, Ramon & Alexcia	August 22, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-509	Mendoza, Leila O.	Lobrio, Marie Vic M.	August 14, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-423	Lu, Jiaojiao	Luo's Corporation	August 14, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-517	Crisostomo, Pepe R.	Marianas Security Corporation	August 22, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-655	Xu, Guoquan	Micro. Holding Co., LLC	August 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-694	Dioneda, Teresita D.	Micronesia Woodcraft Ent., Inc.	August 21, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-693	Tenorio, Dexter G.	Micronesia Woodcraft Ent., Inc.	August 21, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-696	Pineda, Josefina C.	Micronesian Engine Services	August 14, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-692	Pabale, Rodofo B.	Misamis Construction Spn. Ltd.	August 21, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-695	Buenviaje, Carmen B.	Muna, Arlene A.	August 15, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-697	DLC Cordero, Geraldine C.	Noah Corporation	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-698	Satira, Marjerie R.	Noah Saipan Inc.	August 21, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-688	Francisco, Elenita G.	Pacific Creative Network	August 21, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-669	Antiquena, Celbueno L.	Pacific Printing Press Inc.	August 15, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-670	De Guzman, Maribeth C.	Pacific Printing Press Inc.	August 15, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-678	Bantolino, Carlota Alex	PCC Corporation	August 15, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-584	Jeon, Sook Ja Kim	Power Corporation	August 14, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-420	Wu, Li-Hua	Qing Lang Corporation	August 22, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-426	De Guzman, Lorenzo Q.	RVE Enterprises	August 14, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-656	Caintoy, Raquel U.	Sablan, Deverly Davina M.	August 22, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-654	Jing, Yan Li	Sablan, Vicenta M.	August 22, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-643	Ling, Min	SDM Enterprises, Inc.	August 22, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-431	Zhou, Jian	Shun Yi American Corporation	August 14, 2008	1:00 p.m.
DC 08-664	Sun, Shuqing	SMZ Corporation	August 22, 2008	3:00 p.m.
DC 08-676	Du, Chuanhua	Sunleader Co. Ltd.	August 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-677	Li, Xiulan	Sunleader Co. Ltd.	August 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-597	Yan, Jintang	Suxin Guo Edboi	August 15, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-619	Tababa, Michelle Den Sharon L.	Tababa, Dionesio	August 15, 2008	11:00 a.m.
DC 08-601	Santiago, Ricardo M.	Teregeyo, Marianne C.	August 15, 2008	10:00 a.m.
DC 08-291	Teng, Changwen	Xing Wang Development Corporation	August 15, 2008	9:00 a.m.
DC 08-661	Magcalas, Alberto G.	Yuman Construction	August 22, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-660	Macaspac, Noviminda P.	Yumul, Elena M.	August 22, 2008	2:00 p.m.
DC 08-657	Li, Na	Yun Feng Corporation	August 22, 2008	1:00 p.m.

Cholera claims 147 in West Papua

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—A human rights organization says nearly 150 people have died and many more are affected by a cholera outbreak in the Indonesia's Papua region.

There have reportedly been cholera outbreaks in Papua since the beginning of the year.

Paula Makabori, who works for the Institute of Papuan Advocacy and Human Rights, says Indonesian health officials do not pay any or enough attention to the problem.

Makabori says the Papuans need help urgently.

"The outbreak of cholera has resulted in 147 deaths. The local people report that there's no serious attention from the government. There's no medicine, no doctors who look at the situation."

Makabori says she has written to the World Health Organization about the outbreak about two months ago, but hasn't received a reply yet.

Robberies prompt bank closures in PNG

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—Fears of another bank robbery has forced major commercial banks - Bank South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (PNG) Ltd and Westpac Bank PNG Ltd - to shut down operations in Madang yesterday.

Police in the coastal town swung into full alert when an anonymous caller warned a police officer to drop his investigations into the previous bank robbery and release the suspects in custody.

ANZ and Westpac closed their doors in the morning but reopened for a short period after lunch while BSP closed for the whole day following fears of another robbery and threats made against staff and their families.

Police confirmed the closure of the three banks and the threats issued to the banks and the police, prompting the commander of the Mamose police, Acting Assistant Commissioner Giossi Labi to order a full scale investigation into the threats.

Labi said one of the callers had threatened a policeman telling him to abort the investigations into the BSP Madang heist or his wife and family would be targeted.

Labi said the caller told the policeman that he knew where his wife worked and their residential area.

Labi said that he was taking the threat seriously and police in Lae and Madang were placed on full alert. He said telecommunication companies, Telikom and Digicel were also asked to trace all calls made that day to find the culprits.

He said that police would use the two communication companies to monitor all calls regarding the threats to his policeman.

"Policemen are doing their duties as required of them and being targeted like that will not be tolerated," he said.

"Whoever is doing this will be brought to face the full force of the law." He also called on the public in the region to report to police anyone they see or hear trying to stop police investigations.

Meanwhile, Madang police commander Chief Inspector Anthony Wagambie Jr confirmed the closure of the BSP bank closure and the short-term closure by ANZ and Westpac banks following threats of another robbery and on the staff and their families.

He said the banks were forced to close yesterday as police swung into high alert after the threats.

Wagambie said the caller said that failure to comply would result in workers being taken hostage. He said police would not be taking these threats lightly and said the banks had been informed and that may be the reason they were closed.

"Police and bank workers and their families have been told to take precaution when moving out. Police will be carrying out surveillance work and those found loitering around the homes of senior bank staff will be dealt with. I would also like to warn those who issued the threats that police are determined to get to the bottom of this matter," Wagambie said.

Meanwhile, he said the special police operation code named "Painim Raskol" is continuing.

BSP also shut down its Vanimo and Kainantu branches following similar threats.

Police met with business and community leaders in Kainantu on Tuesday to deal with the situation.

Cooks voyaging canoe to return home

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands (Cook Islands News/PIR)—Vaka Te Au O Tonga is set sail from Pago Pago in American Samoa on Friday afternoon.

Because of wind direction they expect the homeward journey to take up to two weeks.

Two new crew members have joined the vaka on her return voyage as watch captain Te Aturangi Nepia-Clamp had to fly to New Zealand for his Masters of Art studies while chief cook Malcolm Blinkhorn will be returning home by plane.

Nepia-Clamp has been replaced by the president of the American Samoa Voyaging Society. Blinkhorn has been replaced by Clinton Charlie.

Vaka captain Garth Henderson has placed new 'learning watch captains' in charge for the voyage home.

The new learning watch captains have been attached to a mentor and are Masterton Enjoy mentored by Tua Pitman, Harry Goodwin mentored by Ti Pekepo and Nick Henry under the watchful eye of Teheu Kamana.

Crew member Nick Henry reported that before they departed, "Minister of Culture Wilkie Rasmussen did an incredible karakia from the heart. It was a Northern island style from Tongareva, everybody was shaking, it was a very emotional moment."

After two and a half hours of sailing at speeds of 4.5 knots, the vaka was 12 miles from the Pago Pago coast on a 150-160 degree course.

Gas prices make a quick, sharp reduction

NEW YORK (Associated Press)—Some residents of U.S. Pacific territories are cheering their $4.67-a-gallon gas.

That's because it represents a 38-cent drop over the past week.

Sharp reductions in oil prices on international markets triggered decreases in the Northern Marianas, which has come more rapidly than in many U.S. states, including Hawaii.

Regular gas was at $5.05 a gallon on Saipan last week. The islands of Tinian and Rota had even higher prices.

On Saturday, Mobil dropped its pump price to $4.87 a gallon in the island capital and to $4.77 on Wednesday night.

Shell has lowered its retail prices since Saturday with a further dropped to $4.67 a gallon on Friday.

Mobil matched that price as the sun came up Saturday in the islands that are a day ahead of Hawaii.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The new prices of gasoline are displayed at the Shell service station on Middle Road.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

August 11, 1999

Move class suit in California to CNMI

The garment manufacturers and retailers named in the $1 billion class action suit filed in California asked the Central District Court Monday to transfer the case to the federal district court of the Northern Marianas, saying this venue would be more convenient for both parties. The defendants argued that the plaintiffs, witnesses, documents, evidence, and all conditions relating to the case are all on Saipan.

House grants Inos expending power over PSS CIP projects

The House of Representatives yesterday amended a recently-signed law that appropriated nearly $30 million for Public School System's infrastructure development plans to grant expenditure authority to the education commissioner. But the legislative body also agreed to alter the amount of funding set aside for two projects on Rota, slashing $600,000 from the $1.8 million allotted for the completion of Sinapalu Elementary School to increase funding for construction of new public school libraries on the island.

CPA moves to contain oil spill on Tinian

A repossessed and dilapidated fishing vessel sank on Tinian Harbor early Tuesday morning causing an oil spill in the surrounding area. The Commonwealth Ports Authority, together with the Emergency Management Office, U.S. Coast Guard and the Commonwealth Development Authority, carried out containment efforts to prevent any harmful effects on the environment.

August 11, 2000

Delinquent borrowers face CDA foreclosure

Amid the increase in delinquency rate, the Commonwealth Development Authority will foreclose the properties of those who have continuously ignored to settle their loans with the government lending agency. The CDA board has agreed to push through with the foreclosure proceedings after it has given up hopes to recover money from borrowers who have failed to meet their financial obligations, said Executive Director Marylou S. Ada.

DPS taps Hong Kong Interpol

The Department of Public Safety has sought the help of the Hong Kong Interpol to provide them with information regarding the slain Hong Kong Chinese national and his possible killers. The police agency has written to the Hong Kong Interpol recently to help them assist in establishing leads, according to sources from the department. No arrest has been made so far by the authorities. This was revealed after the Federal Bureau of Investigation has stepped into the murder case to help the local police in apprehending the killers of Mr. Tse, who was shot in a restaurant in Chalan Piao.

No more free parking at seaport

Starting Monday, Aug. 14, 2000 the Commonwealth Ports Authority will activate the automated public parking system at the Port of Saipan parking lot. Under the new system, vehicles may enter or exit at the newly constructed white concrete parking booth on the north side of the parking lot near the Seaport building. When entering the parking lot, drivers will have to take a parking ticket from the automated parking machine. When they exit, they will turn in the ticket to the parking lot attendant to pay the parking fee.

August 11, 2002

Church offers advice to cure moral ills

In an age seemingly bombarded with endless adversities--the skyrocketing crime rate, worsening financial crisis and global security worries—how does one cope and manage to go on with life? Is there hope for brighter days ahead? A promise of a better future? The CNMI's most influential Catholic Church leader says there is.

Babauta says he's far from violating law on salary cap issue

Gov. Juan N. Babauta clarified that, far from violating any laws on the salary cap issue, he is still very much within the parameters set by the Salary Compensation Act. Babauta explained that, under that Act, if the Governor wishes to hire a person at a salary that exceeds the ceilings set by law, the law requires him to write to the Legislature and justify why he should hire somebody at a salary higher than the default limit of $50,000 per annum.

Island Snapshots

CHILDREN'S FUN DAY

Scores of children enjoy the newspaper game during the first ever Children's Fun Day at Kilili Pavilion in Susupe Sunday afternoon. The children were treated to food, games, a puppet show, face painting and different kinds of kiddie entertainment.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Children participate in the newspaper game during the first ever Children's Fun Day at Kilili Pavilion in Susupe Sunday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

NATIVE MEDICINE SYMPOSIUM

Tinian healers make their presentation during the Native Medicine Symposium by the Inetnon Amot Natibu/ Ammwelil Safeyal Faluwasch at the Man'amko Center in Garapan Saturday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

WINE RALLY

Hotel staff and guests enjoy their Thursday night during the Pacific Wine & Spirits Inc.'s wine rally inside the Fresko restaurant of the Palms Resort Saipan in San Roque.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Contestant compete in a game facilitated by Pacific Wines and Spirits' Orleyne Tabucanon and event host Brad Ruszala during the Pacific Wine & Spirits, Inc.'s wine rally inside the Fresko restaurant of the Palms Resort Saipan in San Roque.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Medicinal plants are displayed by the CNMI Forestry Division during the Native Medicine Symposium by the Inetnon Amot Natibu/Ammwelil Safeyal Faluwasch at the Man'amko Center in Garapan Saturday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

'BRIEFING THE BOSS'

Office of the Military/Veterans Affairs executive director Ruth Coleman looks at the display during the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's "Briefing with the Boss" gathering at the Azucena Room of the Fiesta Resort and Spa in Garapan on Thursday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

MUSEUM TOUR

Tourists spend time inside the World War II Museum of the American Memorial Park in Garapan.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Sea change in the CNMI

It's an understatement to say that life in the Marianas is changing fast. And unfortunately for many, dealing with change is not something that's easy. It's just human nature that people like to settle into routines and cling to what they know and the lifestyles they have become used to.

Any way we look at it, times are getting harder. We can see the discomfort in our community through the seething letters to the editor, the raw language in the blogs, and more. Like it or not, it's a fact that our economy is changing rapidly. The local government, businesses and individual lifestyles MUST change in order to deal with rapidly rising costs and a shrinking number of customers.

Could we have stopped the tide from changing? Could we have done better planning?

Whether we're talking about how to deal with the fiscal crisis in the local government, the rising costs of power, fuel, shipping, food, or about federalization of immigration and certain changes this means for jobs and livelihoods—the CNMI is in a time of pivotal significance regarding the decisions we make for the islands' future.

In other words, how we handle the most serious issues of today will determine the future comfort of our community and whether we remain self-sufficient or not.

We don't have the luxury of waiting to see what will happen next. We need to drive the changes ourselves. Unfortunately, it always seems that in the CNMI, planning and cooperation becomes increasingly difficult as we get closer to each election.

Recently a group of approximately 40 planning experts from various segments of the U.S. Department of Defense were on Saipan and Tinian to work on the blueprint for the military buildup in the region. This was not their first meeting, but just one in a series of gatherings to share briefings and talk about the impact of their task on the Marianas. They listened to a local panel talk about the CNMI's economic challenges, and they took a trip to Tinian to see what the island and its local infrastructure is like. These planners are on a deadline because the buildup and the changes that will be required will be here fast.

Without a doubt, the CNMI will gain something from the military buildup. Shall we wait for their plan and then react? Or should we put our act together and make stronger, more organized efforts to get our islands back in gear and drive certain readiness from within?

Just one of the things that local companies can do now is register their interest, capabilities and qualifications in performing various services in support of the Guam military buildup initiative. Interested firms can respond to a questionnaire by downloading a market survey form at www.neco.navfac.navy.mil.

Local companies in the CNMI can also plan to take part in the buildup by going through the steps now to register as veteran, minority and/or women-owned businesses that can work with prime contractors. There are federal requirements to give a certain level of business to such firms and this is not just in construction. Those who study up on the military's requirements and prepare now will likely benefit sooner.

For example, we could work harder and faster to develop our other industries, such as agriculture and aquaculture. Knowing that the cost of food is going up, there will be a growing local market as our sister islands welcomes many more military personnel, their families and contractors. We should build up our farming on Rota, Tinian and Saipan, and get our interisland shipping capability back up to snuff so we can get these local products to market on Guam.

We can resist change or we can plan for it. No one has all of the answers, but if we simply stand still and expect others to solve our problems, we're likely to get swept away in the changing tide.

We can and will become strong again!

First part of a series

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

The other night there was a thunderstorm with lightning and rain. When a loud burst of thunder suddenly roared through the house, my 7-year-old daughter came running into the room crying and terribly frightened. I quickly held her tight in my arms and assured her there was no danger. Later that evening I sat thinking about us in the CNMI. Aren't we also frightened at this time and need someone to assure us that the dangers we are facing can be overcome?

Daily we see our beloved islands besieged with problems such as failing businesses, our government's inability to provide satisfactory basic utility services, the departure of our relatives and neighbors to seek a better life elsewhere, inadequate medical services, a depressing drop in tourism, the continuing high rate of indigenous unskilled workers, increasing food stamp recipients, the loss of the tax-generating garment industry, and other problems. All of these accompanied by a change in our culture and beliefs. As a result we feel confused and lost.

All of the above problems were caused by people, not by natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, tsunami, typhoons or even war, which is a man-made form of destruction. Therefore, because people caused them, people must resolve them. But herein lies the difficulty. We know the problems and we know the solutions. But *we lack the will and determination to correct them! We refuse to make the sacrifice and discipline needed to correct them!*

Perhaps sounding like a mister know-it-all, I am going to stick my neck out and propose several steps to recovery. Therefore in the next few articles, I will discuss various avenues that we should approach if we are to solve the problems facing us. We may or may not agree on the methods, but that is okay. If I can make us stand up and insist on improvement, I will have done my job! I want to be our gadfly. Your ideas may be better than mine. But if I can inspire hope and motivation, we will regain control of our destiny and we will overcome! As I mentioned in the first paragraph, we are frightened and have lost our direction.

The first suggestion to getting back on track is to turn to the person we acknowledge as our leader. Unless the man we elected as our leader begins to assure us that all will be right, like I did to my daughter, we will not improve and continue to flee and be frightened. Therefore I am making the following plea to our Governor:

"Governor Fitial, please talk to us directly. Explain clearly to us what you feel is wrong and why. What actions did we do in the past to get us into this predicament? Show us by your leadership that you are feeling the same pain and frustration that we are. Explain why it is so difficult to correct the problems at CUC and at the CPA. Assure us many times over that we are in firm hands. Assure us that you have matters well under control.

"Governor, reach out to us in our moment of fear and despair. You are our most important spokesman. Let us feel your compassion. We need to be comforted at this time of need and despair. If you do not, why did we elect you?

"And please, sir, do not do it through your press media spokesman. *We want to see you and hear you say the words directly to us. We want to see your face and hear your words. Come and walk among us. Hold open discussions and invite all of us to hear you. Listen to our fears directly. Don't tell us your advisors say "so and so." They do not know any better than you. As former President Harry Truman used to say: 'The buck stops here!'*

"One strong suggestion is that you appear on television weekly and talk to us for at least 30 minutes. Explain how you see the current situation; how you think we can come together and overcome our problems. Also explain why you feel so strongly against what the U.S. is supposedly doing to us because of the enactment of the federalization bill. Do you actually believe it is trying to destroy us or subjugate us? We need to hear these things from you directly.

"I also strongly urge you not to fight with our only benefactor, the United States. All your talk about the GAO report not being accurate and federalization will destroy us, I am sorry but I don't agree. Look at how prosperous Guam is. Yet it is more under the control of the U.S. than we are. The United States needs us. Unfortunately at this stage they don't really know how to handle us. That is all the more reason we should be close to them and help them to understand us better.

"You and your 'advisers' are frightening us by insisting that by 2014 or any other date, we will be totally devastated from this action by the United States. Having been in business for over 45 years, I have learned that plans, whether they are business, personal or government plans, are constantly in a state of flux and must be adapted to changes. At most, plans have only a year of validity. I have rarely seen any plan being carried out over a longer period of time, no matter how well structured. Too many factors keep changing and the plans must adapt to them.

See WE CAN on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

COE@BOE *Atbp*

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

A colleague warned last week that the welcome back to PSS we extended to Ms. Rita Sablan on Monday in this column might have been premature and that we might end up eating crow by the time Lucy and her team got done with their HR deliberations. I would like to be dramatic and say, we took an Olympic-size risk but that would not be factual. We were just exercising ordinary handwriting-on-the-wall reading, and of the teachers gathered this week to hone down the standards-based assessment schemes in our educational system, not a few of whom were TOY awardees, there was a unanimity on the prognosis borne prescient by Saturday's pow-wow reported in yesterday's paper.

Speaking of Olympic-size performances, the advanced billing on famed Chinese cinema director Zhang Yimou's orchestrated Olympiad XXIX opening lived up beyond expectations, proving that the *Zhong Guo* (Chinese) government spared none of the *renmimbi yuan* (Chinese currency) it earned for stocking the shelves of WalMart and PriceCosto to make this the mother of all spectaculars. And I would be curious if anyone ever pegged down the precise happening during the epic extravaganza on the eight-year of the millennium, the eight-month, the eight-day, the eight-hour and the eight-second (08.08.08.08.08) in the Beijing 2008 "Bird's Nest" tableau. I would not be surprised if a couple of the 17,000 who decided to connubially unite that day, said their "I do" precisely at that moment!

The *Atbp* on the heading of this article is the Pilipino version *(at iba pa)* of the Latin "etcetera" (and other things), which I am using to indicate that this literary rendering is definitely a lazy meandering down the river of consciousness. We do these often to the great consternation of not a few colleagues who prefer the straightforward format of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis dialectic of conventional essays with their logical sequence of this, that, and the other, so therefore. It is the tail end of summer for this schoolmarmy dude, and if John Davis can afford the time to toss his hat to the U.S. delegate election ring, we certainly have the time to meander.

The Beautify CNMI virus showed its warm heart and dirty hands on its scheduled first-weekend-of-the-month cleanup foray. Ironically, with the lackluster economy, parents and other home-based adults have more time to join communal activities. Angelo and his team might consider hitting the PTA circuit early.

Herbal plants used for medicinal purposes were the focus of the gathering at the Man'amko Center in Gualo Rai last Saturday. Not only was the dialogue between modern and traditional medicine attempted, but also samples and photos of plants and fruits native to the islands used for healing were on display. Other plants that had been added to the islands' flora might also be added at the next turn since plants such as the *malunggay, saluyot, banaba, camote, atbp*—common fare to many Pinoy cuisinart—have proven not only to have nutritional value but medicinal virtues as well.

A U. S. congressional staff delegation is on island, occasioning my former publisher's ranting and raving, and lighting up the workers' Coalition and Irene's crusade along with Wendy's boys and the Dekada brigade, so political discourse at the fringes livened up this weekend.

Mainstream politics was evident as clusters of cars showed up in many people's yards to strategize for the upcoming U.S. congressional delegate position. My shortlist includes the incumbent Pete A., who obviously has the advantage of being the re-electionist and thereby, do not need to step down from office. Here-come-the-judge carries considerable weight and will not be dismissed. Crisostimo will have to step down once his candidacy is certified but he is a definitely a contender of immense following, though Cing as party-endorsed candidate will cut down his tally, but the local donkey has yet to locate its tail, so the division is neither ideological or personal, but more of island identity and loyalty. Gonzales brings a lot of passion and ego, not necessarily in that order, and the latter not necessarily to be perceived as a minus. The youth and energy is on display. Kilili is the knight in shining armor but that quality has not been, in my observation, an admired one in the political arena.

The Atbp *on the heading of this article is the* Pilipino version (at iba pa) *of the* Latin "etcetera" (and other things), *which* I *am using to indicate that this literary rendering is definitely a lazy meandering down the river of consciousness.*

Meanwhile, beer and food consumption rose this weekend as tax rebate checks started showing up in mailboxes, though the distribution rationale of the child credit tax and federal stimulus tax remains elusive to many, particularly those who most need them. I had been dodging bill collectors lately, and if this intensifies, I will have to start banging on Eloy's doors soon.

A hopeful and productive series of sessions that caused my shortening a summer excursion by two weeks is the standard-based assessment gathering at Dandan Elementary. First, there is finally the recognition that since multiple intelligences must be recognized in designing curriculum, multiple assessment tools will also have to be employed to achieve meaningful accountability. This is well for the students. Should the insight segue into the teachers' realm, our BOE might actually see the folly of using PRAXIS as a singular determining factor in assessing the HQT of our teaching staff. While at it, and since there has since been located personnel funds, they might revisit the grandparenting issue that set many veteran teachers back due to barely missing test scores, as well as reinstate monetary incentives to those who upgraded their certification levels. Enough said.

But more significantly as a pedagogue, our group practiced a method of discourse that began with the objective data where accuracy can be discussed without stepping on anyone's toes, followed by personal impressions and preferences elicited and received as responses to be shared rather than divisively debated. Thoughts then follow to determine logic and consistency, sensibility and practicality, before a set of actions is proposed that can then be the basis of consensus or further deliberation. Some exchanges got heated when the discourse deviated from this four-step sequence but the challenge remains for the methodological prowess of teachers and group dynamics leaders to sharpen their facilitative skills and adopt efficient and effective group procedures that can be applicable to PTA, staff and even legislative meetings.

The last week of the month will see some of us teachers who lazed during the summer trekking back to our homerooms to make sure they look more like homey dwellings rather than plastered warehouse cubicles. If a stadium in Beijing can be constructed to look like a bird's nest, surely, our classrooms should be a welcoming platform for the community of learning to flourish and abide.

Fellow teachers, let's get to work.

Letters to the Editor

Another indigenous point of view

I read with distress the Friday article put forth by Herman Tudela and Oscar Rasa. The most important and first point that I want to make is that I do not feel that these people represent indigenous interests.

The second point I am interested in stressing to my indigenous brothers and sisters is that the concept set forth known as the Mariana Trench Marine Monument is a project of and for the people of the CNMI. The proposal that we will create together will include whatever interests we collectively believe to be important to our children's future.

We have a choice to react with fear and keep doing things the same way, the way that got us to where we are today. Or we can join our public voice together in saying that we want something different. The government should be helping the people by providing the platform to allow us to help ourselves. The creation of a marine monument opens the doors to possibilities that we have yet to discover. We can approach this idea with an open mind and together create a list of suggestions for our leaders to discuss should the federal government decide to make an assessment of our concept for the Mariana Trench Marine Monument.

For the sake of peace and unity, I will agree with Rasa and Tudela on our culture's relationship with the ocean and our people's interest in preserving tradition and culture. Additionally, I would seek their agreement on the importance of education and the benefits for our youth that could materialize as a result of supporting the monument concept. Furthermore, I would seek to include both Chamorro and Carolinian interests. With an open mind, the possibilities are endless. What would you see on a "wish list?" Here are some of the ideas that I have come up with and am sharing with my friends and family.

For example, we could request that children of grade six or higher be provided the opportunity, with parental approval, to join a regularly scheduled educational boat trip to the islands. This trip's focus could include a curriculum that focuses on cultural and traditional practices as well school curriculum ocean science.

The Northern Mariana College could benefit through multiple possibilities, including additional science programs, grants and other funding, research partnerships and foreign exchange student programs. NMC could also be the main contact for any other university research programs inquiring about the area preserved by the monument from anywhere in the world. Researchers interested in setting up a regular program could have to include certain and specific requirements that would benefit the education of our children at any level.

Another example that comes to mind is that we could implement a Carolinian cultural center where customs and practices could be shared both within our community and at discretion with public audiences. Perhaps it could be a part of the monument visitor center.

With national monument status, we could insist on additional Coast Guard protections, such as those afforded to other national monuments.

The most important message that I want people to know is that not everyone is against the monument and many supporters are afraid to speak up for fear of retribution. Some of us see the benefits for our children, especially in the areas of education and research, which is why I choose to promote this idea.

Ignacio Cabrera
Papago, Saipan

WE CAN

From Page 10

"Let us concern ourselves with implementing solid short-range plans in concert with the United States. Let us work with them. They too need to have us succeed. We will get only what we negotiate. We need to compromise, not be confrontational.

"Another strong suggestion is that you and the Lt. Governor make up. It is sad to hear that you and he are not speaking to one another. He is in the same building but you both are miles apart. It is chilling to know that the two most important and powerful men leading us are not on speaking terms. To whom do we turn to in need? To whom do we pledge our loyalty? To whom do the various agencies report? Are your personal feelings greater than the people that depend on you both?

"A third suggestion is that your administration work closer with the House and Senate. They too need assurance that you are there to protect us. I also strongly urge the House and Senate to work closer with you and your staff. Please talk and talk until you reach a unanimous plan of action. Unless we become unified in our course of action, we will never move ahead. Why aren't we all speaking in a unified voice during these trying moments? 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' Abraham Lincoln said that a long time ago.

"Governor, unless you take the lead in assuring us, we will remain confused and continue to flee the islands. You must also inspire us so that we can achieve 'better times.' Leadership and guidance come from the top!"

As Charles Dickens wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of enlightment, it was the age of foolishness." It remains to be seen which it will be. I pause until next week when I will discuss other steps we must take to overcome our problems.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

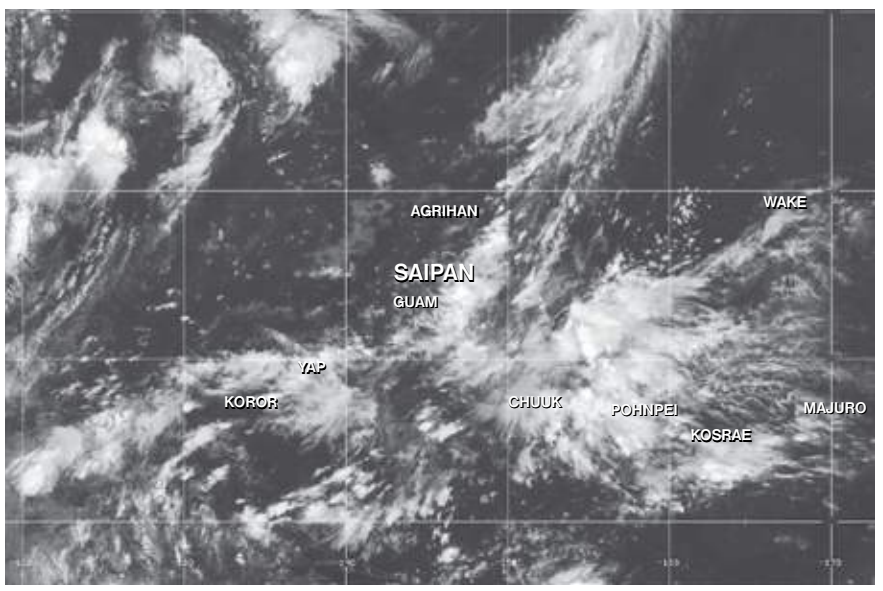
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼81
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Majuro	Showers	▲86	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	▲57	▼49
Beijing	Thunderstorms	▲81	▼72
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲88	▼79
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼76
London	Showers	▲72	▼57
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲82	▼64
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲54	▼41
Miami	Thundershowers	▲91	▼76
New York	Thundershowers	▲78	▼65
Osaka	Cloudy	▲91	▼75
Paris	Showers	▲73	▼59
Pusan	Thundershowers	▲87	▼77
Rome	Sunny	▲87	▼64
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼52
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲75	▼55
Seoul	Thundershowers	▲91	▼79
Tokyo	Thundershowers	▲87	▼75
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼64

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:25PM, SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Converging winds south of a low-pressure system located north of Minamitori Shima are causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over the island or north of a line from 22N150E to 23N155E to 25N158E. An upper-level trough reaches northwestward from EQ135E to 10N130E. Divergence associated with this trough is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over Koror and Yap between 6N and 10N from 130E to 142E. Trade-wind convergence is creating scattered showers well south of Yap up to 150 miles north of the equator from 138E to 147E. Trade-wind convergence is combining with favorable upper-level dynamics to trigger scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over a large area within 320 miles of a line from 15N147E to 11N154E to 2N163E. This area stretches southeastward from just east of the Marianas across Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae to near the equator.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
1:32AM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
9:46AM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
5:46PM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
9:52PM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:02AM	6:43 PM
Tuesday	6:02AM	6:42 PM
Wednesday	6:02AM	6:42 PM
Thursday	6:02AM	6:41 PM
Friday	6:02AM	6:41 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:20PM	12:48AM
Tuesday	3:11PM	1:37AM
Wednesday	4:01PM	2:29AM
Thursday	4:49AM	3:23 PM
Friday	4:49AM	3:23 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 18, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	4:00am	4:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099	5:00am	7:40am	Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm	Daily
NW 075	4:45pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:55am	11:35am	Daily

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Guam-Hongkong

CO 909	6:40pm	9:25pm	1,5

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:15am	2:55pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:30am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:25am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	9:00pm	1:30am+1	Daily

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:40am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:20pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	10:35pm	5:15am+1	1,5

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Oil sinks on stronger dollar to $115 a barrel

NEW YORK (AP)—Oil prices dove to $115 a barrel on Friday, driven lower by a huge jump in the U.S. dollar, signs of moderating demand around the world and the burgeoning belief that commodities may have peaked.

Shrugging off concerns about a sabotaged oil pipeline in Turkey, investors pulled their money out of commodities and put it back into stocks - giving crude oil a weekly loss of nearly $10 a barrel, and driving the Dow Jones industrial average up more than 300 points.

With energy losing its luster in the marketplace, the cost of roadside gasoline has been crawling lower. The average retail price for a gallon of gasoline slipped to $3.836 Friday. That's down about a penny from Thursday, and down nearly 28 cents from the record high of $4.114 reached July 17.

"We're probably going to see gasoline at the retail level around $3.50 for Labor Day," said James Cordier, president of Tampa, Fla.-based trading firms Liberty Trading Group and OptionSellers.com.

Light, sweet crude for September delivery slumped $4.82 to settle at $115.20 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange - its lowest settlement since May 1, when it settled at $112.52. During Friday's trading, crude dipped as low as $114.90. Prices for gasoline, heating oil and natural gas also dropped.

Many analysts have pointed to the $117-a-barrel mark for crude oil as technically significant - a move below this level suggests, they say, that oil's recent slide is more than a brief pullback. Crude is now down $32 from its high of $147.27 on July 11.

Pilots complain airlines restrict fuel to cut cost

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pilots are complaining that their airline bosses, desperate to cut costs, are forcing them to fly uncomfortably low on fuel.

Safety for passengers and crews could be compromised, they say.

The situation got bad enough three years ago, even before the latest surge in fuel prices, that NASA sent a safety alert to federal aviation officials.

No action.

Since then, pilots, flight dispatchers and others have continued to sound off with their own warnings, yet the Federal Aviation Administration says there is no reason to order airlines to back off their effort to keep fuel loads to a minimum.

"We can't dabble in the business policies or the personnel policies of an airline," said FAA spokesman Les Dorr. He said there was no indication safety regulations were being violated.

The September 2005 safety alert was issued by NASA's confidential Aviation Safety Reporting System, which allows air crews to report safety problems without fear their names will be disclosed.

"What we found was that because they carried less fuel on the airplane, they were getting into situations where they had to tell air traffic control, 'I need to get on the ground,'" said Linda Connell, director of the NASA reporting system.

With fuel prices now their biggest cost, airlines are aggressively enforcing new policies designed to reduce consumption.

In March, for example, an airline pilot told NASA he landed his regional jet with less fuel than required by FAA regulations. "Looking back," he said, "I would have liked more gas yesterday." He also complained that his airline was "ranking" captains according to who landed with the least amount.

AP

A pilot gets an electronic ticket at a Lufthansa counter Thursday, Aug. 7, 2008.

AP

Daniel Fulton constructs dormers for a home at the Westchester Modular Homes factory in Wingdale, N.Y. Thursday, Aug. 7, 2008. The employee-owned company produces about 400 modular homes annually.

Productivity growth slowed in spring

WASHINGTON (AP)—The efficiency of America's workers grew at a slightly slower pace in the spring as companies sought to produce more with leaner work forces. Workers' compensation growth slowed, too.

The Labor Department reported Friday that productivity—the amount an employee produces for every hour on the job—grew at an annual rate of 2.2 percent during the April-to-June quarter. That was down from a 2.6 percent growth rate logged in the first three months of this year.

Economists were forecasting productivity to pick up slightly to a 2.7 percent pace.

"The economy is limping along and businesses are doing whatever they can to remain competitive," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economics Advisors in Holland, Pa. "So, we had fewer people working shorter hours and producing more."

Meanwhile, growth in compensation—wages and benefits—also slowed as companies were less generous amid troubles in the economy and uncertainty about their own prospects.

Unit labor costs slipped to a 1.3 percent pace in the second quarter, from a 2.5 percent growth rate in the first quarter. Unit labor costs is a measure of how much companies pay workers for every unit of output they produce. Economists look to this barometer for clues about inflation.

The showing on compensation matched economists' expectations.

While slower compensation growth isn't welcomed by workers, economists said the moderation eases some inflation concerns. Back in the 1970s, the country battled "stagflation," a toxic mix of stagnant growth and stubborn inflation. Workers demanded—and received—higher wages to keep up with ever-rising prices.

Dollar soars higher on euro zone woes

NEW YORK (AP)—The dollar soared Friday in what analysts are calling a game-changing move as concerns about the deteriorating euro zone economy gripped investors and commodities sold off.

In late trading in New York, the euro came off its lows to $1.5013 from $1.5328 late Thursday. Earlier in the day, it sank as low as $1.5004. It is the highest point for the dollar since late February, and a rapid recovery from July 15, when the euro hit a record against the dollar at $1.6038.

"There's a real capitulation under way," said David Gilmore, partner at Foreign Exchange Analytics in Essex, Conn. "In 24 hours it's gone from $1.55 to $1.50, which is highly unusual. That changes your game plan for the marketplace."

The euro also sank against the British pound and the Japanese yen - both of which are also weakening against the dollar.

On Thursday, the European Central Bank and Bank of England left their key interest rates unchanged at 4.25 percent and 5 percent, respectively. ECB President Jean-Claude Trichet issued a warning on inflation and said economic growth figures for the second and third quarters of 2008 would be much weaker than in the early part of the year. He signaled that an interest-rate increase to counter inflation would probably not be forthcoming.

Higher interest rates can buck up a currency, as investors transfer assets where they can get better yields, while lower interest rates can weaken a currency.

The pound, meanwhile, recovered slightly $1.9198 after earlier selling as low as $1.9145, its lowest point since November 2006. On Thursday, the pound sold for $1.9436. But the dollar leaped to 110.24 Japanese yen from 109.45 yen, its highest level since January.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

McDonald's July same-store sales rise 8 percent

NEW YORK (AP)—Despite a tough U.S. economy, McDonald's Corp. posted an 8 percent gain in July same-store sales on Friday as hungry consumers worldwide lined up for breakfast items and the classic Big Mac sandwich. Many consumers have cut back on eating out amid economic weakness and rising gasoline prices, but business at the Golden Arches held up well in July, especially in the U.S. Same-store sales, or sales at stores open at least 13 months, grew 6.7 percent in the U.S. Same-store sales are a key indicator of restaurant performance because the measure growth at existing locations rather than newly opened ones. Total sales worldwide soared 15.9 percent.

Insurance weighs on Berkshire Hathaway's 2Q profit

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—Berkshire Hathaway Inc. reported an 8 percent decline in second-quarter profit Friday because it collected fewer insurance premiums and recorded $1 billion in unrealized derivative losses. Billionaire Warren Buffett's company said it generated $2.9 billion in net income, or $1,859 per share, during the quarter that ended June 30. That's down from the $3.1 billion net income, or $2,018 per share, it reported in the same period a year ago. The three analysts surveyed by Thomson Financial were expecting earnings per share of $1,370.33 on average. Berkshire generated $30.1 billion in revenue during the second quarter, up from $27.3 billion last year.

Fannie Mae loses $2.3B in quarter as defaults rise

WASHINGTON (AP)—Fannie Mae is making bold cutbacks that will send shock waves through the mortgage market, after posting a quarterly loss Friday that was three times larger than Wall Street expected. To slow its financial decline, the mortgage finance giant slashed its dividend to 5 cents a share from 35 cents a share and said it will eliminate loans for borrowers with solid credit scores, but little proof of income or small or no down payments. The company also is raising its mortgage fees, which will be passed onto borrowers as higher interest rates or closing costs.

Stocks jump as oil prices fall sharply

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street rebounded smartly Friday, shooting higher as a surge in the dollar and another plunge in oil prices eased some of investors' worries. The Dow Jones industrials soared more than 300 points, more than wiping out a big loss from the previous session, and all the major indexes had their best weekly gains since April. The Dow rose 302.89, or 2.65 percent, to 11,734.32. The blue chips fell nearly 225 points Thursday after concerns about the financial sector, a weak showing by retailers in July and a spike in weekly unemployment claims; Friday's advance marked the seventh time in two weeks that the Dow rose or fell by triple digits. The Standard & Poor's 500 index advanced 30.25, or 2.39 percent, to 1,296.32 and the Nasdaq composite index advanced 58.37, or 2.48 percent, to 2,414.10.

Nation

Father of former Olympian killed in Beijing

BEIJING (AP)—The fatal stabbing of the father of a former Olympian at a Beijing landmark cast a sad shadow over the first full day of Olympic competition Saturday, just hours after China's jubilant opening of the Summer Games.

Todd and Barbara Bachman of Lakeville, Minn.—parents of 2004 volleyball Olympian Elisabeth "Wiz" Bachman and in-laws of U.S. men's volleyball coach Hugh McCutcheon—were attacked by a Chinese man while visiting the 13th-century Drum Tower.

The assailant, Tang Yongming, 47, leapt to his death from a 130-foot high balcony on the Drum Tower, just five miles from the main Olympics site, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The U.S. Olympic Committee confirmed Bachman died from knife wounds and that Barbara Bachman suffered life-threatening lacerations and stab wounds. She and their Chinese tour guide, who was also injured in the attack, were being treated in a Beijing hospital.

Mrs. Bachman underwent eight hours of surgery and was in critical but stable condition, the committee said, adding that McCutcheon would "not be on the bench today" for the U.S. men's volleyball team's opening game against Venezuela.

Elisabeth Bachman was with them at the time of the attack, but uninjured. Her father was chief executive officer for Bachman's Inc., a home-and-garden center based in Minneapolis.

Two of Todd and Barbara Bachman's other adult daughters were flying to China to be with their mother and Elisabeth, Dale Bachman, Todd's second counsin, said at a news conference in Minneapolis.

"The next 24 hours will be critical," he said.

According to Dale Bachman, Todd Bachman was walking a few steps behind his wife and daughter at a Beijing tourist site when he was attacked by a knife-wielding stranger. Barbara Bachman heard the commotion and turned to help her husband.

AP

In a undated family photo released by Bachman's Inc., a Minneapolis company, CEO Todd Bachman, right, is shown with his wife Barbara, left, and daughter, former Oympian Elisabeth, center.

911 callers told of carnage in Texas bus wreck

SHERMAN, Texas (AP)—Witnesses who called 911 after the crash of a charter bus that killed at least 17 people described a chaotic scene, telling emergency workers of bloody passengers crushed beneath the smoking wreckage, according to calls released Saturday by police.

The unlicensed bus carrying 55 members of a Vietnamese Catholic group from Houston to Carthage, Mo., for a religious festival smashed into a guardrail and skidded off a highway early Friday near the Texas-Oklahoma state line. Twelve people died at the scene and five more died at hospitals.

One emergency call began with a female crash victim speaking in accented English over the screams and moans of other passengers. After struggling to answer the 911 operator's questions, she handed the phone to a man who had apparently arrived at the scene immediately after the crash.

"We've got people crushed underneath the bus," the man said. "The bus is smoking. It might catch fire."

A female caller told a 911 operator that there were passengers "just everywhere out here laid out on the ground. They are bloody." Another caller said: "There's people screaming for help."

Most of the passengers were from the Vietnamese Martyrs Church and two other mostly Vietnamese congregations in Houston, heading to an annual festival honoring the Virgin Mary. The Marian Days pilgrimage, which started in the late 1970s, attracts thousands of Catholics of Vietnamese descent and includes a large outdoor Mass each day, entertainment and camping at night.

AP

A truck crosses the bridge in Sherman, Texas, Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008, where a bus carrying a Vietnamese Catholic group to an annual pilgrimage crashed early Friday. Another person has died bringing the death toll to 16.

Edwards ex-mistress rules out paternity test

WASHINGTON (AP)—The ex-mistress of former presidential candidate John Edwards said Saturday she will not participate in DNA testing to establish the paternity of her daughter.

Rielle Hunter's lawyer, Robert Gordon, says his client is a private individual who is not running for public office and that she wishes to maintain the privacy of her and her daughter.

"Rielle is therefore making no statement now or in the future," Gordon said in a statement. "Furthermore, Rielle will not participate in DNA testing or any other invasion of her or her daughter's privacy now or in the future."

On Friday, Edwards admitted to having an extramarital affair with Hunter in 2006 but denied that he was the father of Hunter's 5-month-old daughter. Edwards offered to take a paternity test to prove he is not the father.

Hunter

Hunter's decision means that the issue of who the father is remains an open question.

Hunter's daughter, Frances Quinn Hunter, was born on Feb. 27 this year, and no father's name is given on the birth certificate filed in California.

A former Edwards campaign staff member professes to be the father.

Edwards, a former North Carolina senator who was the Democratic vice presidential nominee in 2004, confessed to ABC News that he had lied repeatedly about the affair with Hunter, then 42, who produced videos for Edwards as he prepared to launch his presidential campaign.

Battle of Gettysburg 'witness tree' falls in storm

GETTYSBURG, Pa. (AP)—Standing just 150 feet from the platform on which President Abraham Lincoln delivered his most famous speech, one of the few remaining "witness trees" to the Battle of Gettysburg has been severely damaged by a storm, National Park Service officials said.

ON THE NET

Gettysburg Park: http://www.nps.gov/gett/

The huge honey locust tree on Cemetery Hill fell Thursday evening.

"The top of it is totally broken off, and (the storm) severely damaged 70 to 80 percent of the tree," Gettysburg National Military Park spokeswoman Jo Sanders said. "That means there's not a whole lot left of it. But it didn't kill the tree."

The tree, which stood on the right side of the Union lines, "was there as a silent witness—to the battle, to the aftermath, to the burials, to the dedication of the cemetery," park historian John Heiser said.

"I have no doubt that Union soldiers sat under it for all three days of the battle," he said.

Park maintenance officials will assess what to do with the remains of the tree.

"When it's something this bad, it's highly doubtful that a tree like that can survive," Heiser said.

Heiser said he knows of only three other witness trees that still stand in the heart of the battlefield.

"It's a shame when you lose the last living entities on this battlefield," he said. "Nothing lives forever, unfortunately."

ACROSS THE NATION

More Nebraska Beef recalled despite assurances

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—Federal authorities last month assured consumers that a meat plant linked to nearly 50 illnesses caused by tainted ground beef had made enough changes after a recall to ensure that its products were safe. Less than a month later, the same processor has recalled 1.2 million pounds of other beef products that might have sickened more than 30 people. The changes made after the first recall of meat processed by Nebraska Beef Ltd. affected only ground beef, Laura Reiser, spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said Saturday. Nebraska Beef on Friday recalled 1.2 million pounds of primal cuts, subprimal cuts and boxed beef that were made on June 17, June 24 and July 8. The products have been linked to illnesses in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Illlinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Kayaker finishes 1,700-mile solo trip in 54 days

NEW YORK (AP)—A solo kayaker's 1,700-mile journey to promote prostate cancer awareness has wrapped up at a Manhattan pier. Dozens of kayakers and well-wishers greeted Skip Ciccarelli (chick-ahr-ELL'-ee) on Saturday as he paddled down the Hudson River. He set out from Chicago 54 days earlier following a route through three of the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal. The 60-year-old kayaker encountered 6-foot waves and heavy thunderstorms during his trip. He says he sometimes sang songs to pass the time but mostly just enjoyed the ride. Ciccarelli teaches at a vocational high school in Massachusetts. He is a prostate cancer survivor himself.

NYC experiments with traffic-free urban playground

NEW YORK (AP)—For six hours Saturday, Nearly seven miles of Manhattan were stripped of traffic, creating a weekend playground for bikers, walkers and loungers. It emulates similar initiatives in cities around the world in aiming to create a livable, ecologically gentle urban environment. The 6.9-mile, car-free route started at the Brooklyn Bridge and ended to the north at East 72nd Street, with links to Central Park and other open spaces. It included stretches of Park and Lexington avenues and is set to be repeated for the next two Saturdays, starting at 7 a.m.

Asia

Explosions rock restive Chinese region

URUMQI, China (AP)—A series of pre-dawn bombings Sunday killed or wounded at least four people in a restive region of western China, state media said.

The bombings occurred amid tightened security after an attack here last week left 16 border police dead and 15 others wounded in the Muslim region of Xinjiang.

Police suspect that those killed or injured in Sunday's explosions were behind the bombings which struck Kuqa county in the south of Xinjiang, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The agency said witnesses reported seeing flashes of fire and heard gun shots following the explosions.

Xinhua said local military sources confirmed the incident and said they have deployed forces to the area, which was also sealed off by police. Kuqa is 460 miles from Urumqi, the regional capital.

A woman on duty at the emergency unit of the Kuqa People's Hospital said one man was pronounced dead upon arrival while several other people were in critical condition.

"There were several explosions in several places in the county seat of Kuqa this morning and we heard them from the hospital," said a woman on duty at the hospital, who would only give her last name, Tian.

Witnesses reported that explosions hit government offices and public security and military police posts, said Dilxat Raxit, a spokesman for the Germany-based World Uighur Congress, which supports independence for the region.

A man who answered the phone at the Kuqa county government's duty office said he was not aware of the explosions and refused to give his name. Repeated calls to the county's public security bureau rang unanswered.

The latest violence comes after two Americans closely linked to the U.S. Olympic volleyball team were stabbed, one fatally, in a bizarre attack Saturday in the Chinese capital on the first day of the Beijing games.

Normally tight security in Xinjiang was increased in the past week after the fatal attack on border police in the city of Kashgar Monday. The assailants rammed a stolen truck into the group before tossing homemade bombs and stabbing them.

Bush: No one should fear religious freedom

BEIJING (AP)—In a clear reference to China's tight control of churches, President Bush emerged from a church service saying no country should "fear the influence" of religious freedom.

In an upcoming meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Bush promised to continue pushing China to let its people speak and pray freely without harassment. China says that is a matter it can handle without outside interference.

Bush's comments after worshipping with first lady Laura Bush came with added punch as he delivered them in the heart of the Chinese capital during Beijing's Olympic spotlight.

China allows worship only in officially approved churches such as the one Bush visited with his wife, so millions of people pray privately in house churches to avoid detection. The Chinese government has bristled at Bush's prodding as pointless meddling.

Small pro-Tibet protest held in Tiananmen Square

BEIJING (AP)—Activists continued their pro-Tibet demonstrations on Saturday, with the boldest protest coming when they breached heavy security in Tiananmen Square and urged Tibetan freedom before being confronted by angry Chinese onlookers.

The activists clasped each others' hands and walked around the square, chanting "Freedom for Tibet," and "One World, One Dream, Free Tibet" - a play off a Beijing Olympics motto - before they were confronted, according to Canadian Broadcasting Corp. video footage.

Men who appeared to be plainclothes security agents separated the two sides and led the protesters away, said John Hocevar, a member of the activist group, Students for a Free Tibet, who also videotaped the protest.

Separately, two protesters unfurled the Tibetan flag and chanted pro-democracy slogans among the spectators at the equestrian stadium in Hong Kong, but were removed and banned from the venue.

Bush praises China's response to attack

BEIJING (AP)—President Bush has praised China's leadership for its quick response to a deadly attack on two Americans and their Chinese tour guide.

The president expressed his appreciation to Chinese President Hu Jintao before they sat down Sunday for a meeting.

Hu expressed "profound sympathy" to Bush and the family members of the victims. Hu says the Chinese government takes the matter vary seriously and is investigating.

'FREE TIBET' AP

A pro-Tibet protester lights a candle as they pray for the Tibetan victims in the March 2008 crackdown in Lhasa, in Tokyo, Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008. Some 500 protesters marched through a Tokyo street, calling for China to free Tibet.

Death toll in Vietnam's floods rises to 82

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—The death toll from northern Vietnam's floods and landslides rose to 82 after 20 more bodies were recovered, officials said Sunday.

Seven more bodies were recovered in the worst-hit province of Lao Cai, bringing the death toll there to 32, said disaster official Pham Van Toan.

Four more bodies were discovered in the neighboring Yen Bai province and one more body was found in Phu Tho, officials said.

Flash floods and landslides have also claimed at least eight lives in Ha Giang province, raising the overall death toll to 82, said provincial disaster official Hoang Manh Hung.

Another 37 people were reported missing.

"The water is receding but very slowly," said official Luong Tuan Anh of Yen Bai province, where 29 people died. "Many villages remain unreachable by car."

"We expect the death toll to rise because rescue workers have just begun to reach affected areas, where communication was very limited," he said.

Two Filipino journalists are shot dead

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A radio journalist died Saturday from gunshot wounds in the southern Philippines, becoming the second reporter from his network to be killed in less than a week, a colleague said.

Dennis Cuesta, a commentator and program director for Radio Mindanao Network in General Santos City, was shot four times by assailants on motorbikes as he walked home Monday.

Mel Coronel, also a commentator at the network, said Cuesta, 38, never recovered from a coma and died in intensive care on Saturday.

More than a dozen staff members at the network visited Cuesta at the hospital Saturday after hearing he had slightly opened his left eye and moved his eyeball, Coronel said.

"We went inside to talk to him. It was like he was saying goodbye to us," Coronel said.

Doctors later said his heartbeat slowly weakened and he could not be revived.

Another Radio Mindanao journalist, Martin Roxas, 32, was fatally shot in central Roxas city Thursday by a gunman, also on a motorcycle.

Al-Qaida said to lose key WMD operative

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—The killing of an al-Qaida chemical weapons expert in a missile strike two weeks ago on a Pakistani border village has dealt a heavy blow to the terrorist group's ambitions to build weapons of mass destruction, a former CIA case officer says.

Abu Khabab al-Masri was dubbed by terrorism analysts as al-Qaida's "mad scientist." His most notorious work, recorded on videotape, showed dogs being killed in poison gas experiments in Afghanistan when the Taliban ruled.

"If he is out of the picture, al-Qaida's weapons of mass destruction capability has been set back, which would make this one of the more effective strikes in recent years," Arthur Keller, an ex-CIA case officer in Pakistan, told The Associated Press. Keller led the hunt for al-Masri in 2006.

al-Masri

World

Georgia: In 'state of war' over South Ossetia

OUTSIDE TSKHINVALI, Georgia (AP)—Russia and small, U.S.-allied Georgia headed toward a wider war Saturday as Russian tanks rumbled into the contested province of South Ossetia and Russian aircraft bombed a Georgian town, escalating a conflict that already has left hundreds dead.

Georgia's Foreign Ministry said the country was "in a state of war" and accused Russia of beginning a "massive military aggression." The Georgian parliament approved a state of martial law, mobilizing reservists and ordering government authorities to work round-the-clock.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said that Moscow sent troops into South Ossetia to force Georgia into a ceasefire and prevent Georgia from retaking control of its breakaway region after it launched a major offensive there overnight Friday.

In a meeting with refugees, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin characterized Georgia's actions as "complete genocide," according to his office's Web site. Putin also said Georgia had effectively lost the right to rule the breakaway province—an indication Moscow could be preparing to fulfill South Ossetians' wish to be absorbed into Russia.

The risk of the conflict setting off a wider war also increased Saturday when Russian-supported separatists in another breakaway region, Abkhazia, also targeted Georgian troops by launching air and artillery strikes to drive them out.

President Bush called for an end to the Russian bombings and an immediate halt to the violence.

"The attacks are occurring in regions of Georgia far from the zone of conflict in South Ossetia. They mark a dangerous escalation in the crisis," Bush said in a statement to reporters while attending the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Georgia President Mikhail Saakashvili called it an "unprovoked brutal Russian invasion."

"This is about annihilation of a democracy on their borders," Saakashvili told the British Broadcasting Corp. "We on our own cannot fight with Russia. We want immediate cease-fire, immediate cessation of hostilities, separation of Russia and Georgia and international mediation."

At a meeting of the U.N. Security Council Saturday, the third in three days on the issue, Russia refused to agree to a cease-fire or a diplomatic agreement. The move ensured that the fighting with Georgia would keep spilling into other regions such as Abkhazia's Kodori Ridge, where 15 U.N. military observers were told to evacuate.

"A ceasefire would not be a solution. The fighting is still going on. The Georgian forces are continuing to be on the South Ossetian territory," Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged "all parties to immediately end hostilities and to engage, without delay, in negotiations to achieve a peaceful settlement," his office said in a statement late Saturday.

Georgia, a U.S. ally whose troops have been trained by American soldiers, launched the major offensive overnight Friday. Heavy rocket and artillery fire pounded the provincial capital, Tskhinvali. A South Ossetain government statement said firing died down in the capital early Sunday and that 12 Georgian tanks were destroyed on the city's outskirts.

AP

A wounded Georgian woman lies in front of an apartment building, damaged by a Russian airstrike, in the northern Georgian town of Gori, on Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008. According to photographer the wounded woman was later helped by her neighbors and evacuated her to a safe area.

US *faults Russia for rising violence in Georgia*

WASHINGTON (AP)—Russia's use of overwhelming military force against Georgia, including strategic bombers and ballistic missiles, is disproportionate to any threat from the former Soviet state and could escalate tensions in the volatile region, a senior U.S. official said Saturday.

The Bush administration official, who briefed reporters on condition his name not be used because of the sensitive nature of the situation, said Russia has attacked areas in Georgia that are far away from the separatist province of South Ossetia, where the fighting has centered. The official also said the Russian military is striking civilian targets.

"They have employed strategic bombers—the most potent air weaponry that is in the Russian arsenal .... They actually launched ballistic missile attacks on Georgian territory," the official said. He also said Russia has sent more than 1,000 paratroopers and armor into the region.

Russian bombing has also taken place in Abkhazia, a separate breakaway region of Georgia, far from South Ossetia, the official said.

"This is a dangerous escalation in the crisis," the official said. Russia's military response "marks a severe escalation and is being conducted in areas far, far from the South Ossetia zone of conflict, which is where the Russian side has said it needed to protect its citizens and peacekeepers. So the response has been far disproportionate to whatever threat Russia had been citing."

AP

A column of Russian armored vehicles seen in the Ardon Valley, Russia, heading towards the Georgian border and South Ossetia on Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008.

The U.S. official also scolded Moscow for stymieing attempts at mediation and refusing a cease-fire offer from Georgia.

"The Georgians have offered a cease-fire. The response by the Russians has been to step up the attacks, continue bombing civilians with strategic air assets and then to reject the notion of any international mediation at all—it's very difficult for us to understand that," the official said. "It is simply not acceptable that anyone would reject an offer of a cease-fire and a plea for international mediation."

The official criticized Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for suggesting Georgia was conducting "genocide" in South Ossetia.

"Those are some pretty powerful words that are really not helping us to end the violence and bring together a new process that can resolve the conflict," the official said. "The line we're hearing right now (from Russia) is quite tough."

President Bush, in Beijing for the Olympics, spoke with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday.

"The violence is endangering regional peace, civilian lives have been lost and others are endangered. We have urged an immediate halt to the violence and a stand-down by all troops. We call for an end to the Russian bombings," a grim Bush told reporters. He did not take any questions.

WORLD BRIEFS

At least 31 killed in Burkina Faso mining accident

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)—At least 31 people died Saturday in a mudslide at an illegal gold mine in Burkina Faso, state-run radio said. Miners dug through the mud to try to rescue survivors and pull out bodies in the mining village of Boussoukoula in southwest Burkina Faso, state radio said. Heavy rains were blamed for the landslide. The accident comes after a June government order for unofficial mines to close until Sept. 30 because of the risk of accidents during the rainy season, when hastily dug tunnels can easily collapse.

No release for Mauritania's deposed president

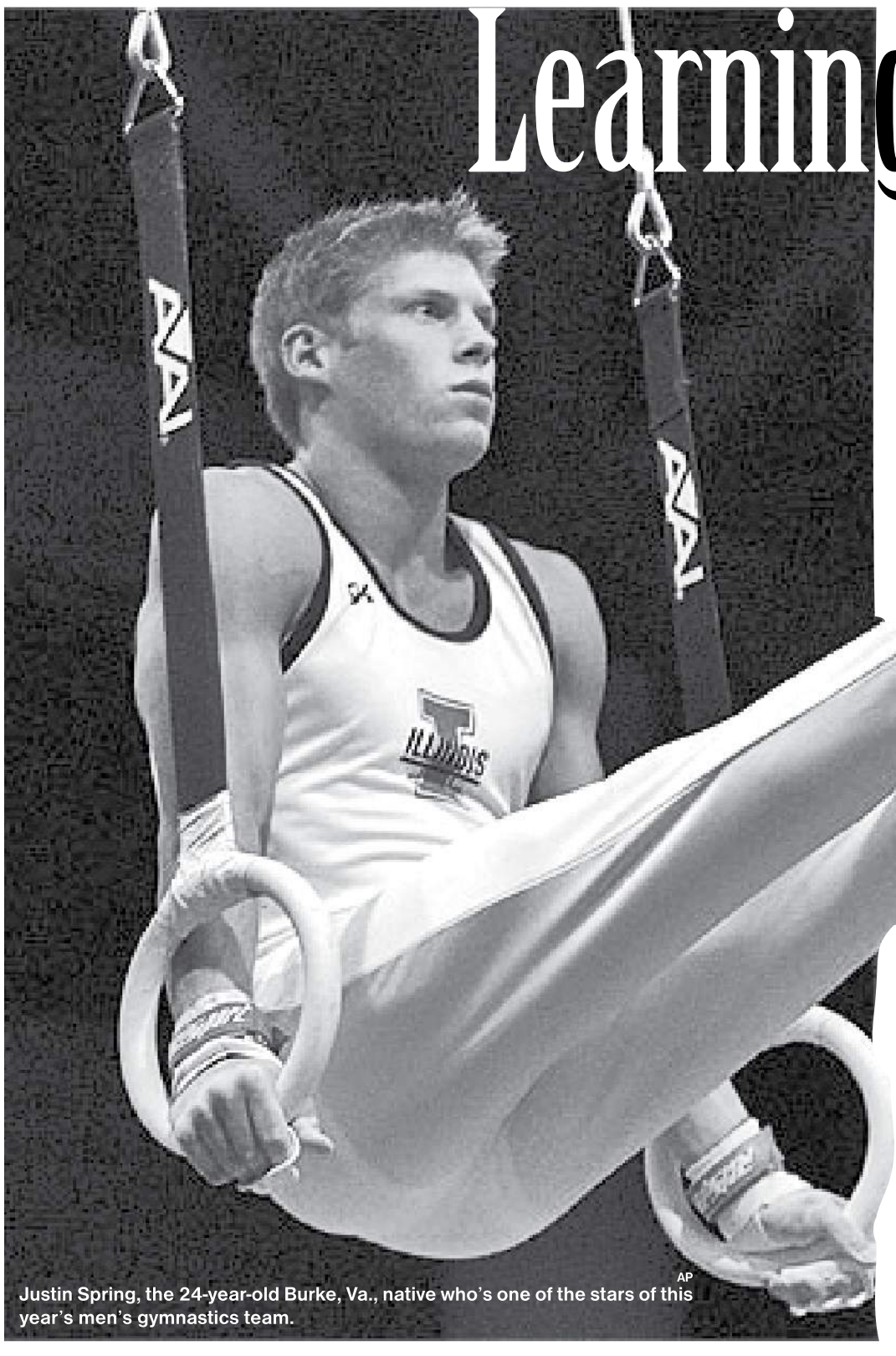
NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania (AP)—The leader of Mauritania's coup said the democratically elected president he deposed would not be released because of "security concerns," a London-based Arabic newspaper reported Saturday. Ousted President Sidi Cheikh Ould Abdallahi, overthrown Wednesday, is in good health, junta leader Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz was quoted as saying by the pan-Arab, Saudi-funded newspaper Asharq Awsat. "Currently, we are not going to release the ousted president because of security concerns," Aziz was quoted as saying. "The former president is with us, in good health." Aziz promised elections would be held but could not give a date.

Mexico fines US drivers seeking cheap diesel

MEXICO CITY (AP)—A Mexican border city has begun fining U.S. drivers who cross the border to fill extra drums, tanks or barrels with government-subsidized Mexican fuel. The city of Ciudad Acuna, across the border from Del Rio, Texas, said Friday that it fined four U.S. residents for carrying extra diesel and would impound their cars until they pay. The fines equal 70 percent of the value of the diesel confiscated. U.S. drivers can fill up their own vehicles, but carrying extra fuel containers back across the border violates customs regulations and possibly safety rules, a report from the city said. Mexico, one of the world's top 10 oil producers, sells diesel fuel domestically at subsidized prices of about US$2.25 per gallon, about half the U.S. price.

Health & Fitness

Learning from Olympians


Justin Spring, the 24-year-old Burke, Va., native who's one of the stars of this year's men's gymnastics team.
AP

By VICKY HALLETT and HOWARD SCHNEIDER
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Dominique Dawes has three Olympic medals, one of the best nicknames in sports ("Awesome Dawesome") and the ability to sit in a split for hours on end. So what doesn't the legendary gymnast have? Weights.

The same goes for Justin Spring, the 24-year-old Burke, Va., native who's one of the stars of this year's men's gymnastics team. The only weights he picks up during the season are teensy dumbbells for his shoulder rehab. "It's all body weight," he says. "That's what translates to what we do. You could bench press 300 pounds, but that won't help you on the rings. We're using the tiniest stabilizer muscles."

You might not be planning to dangle from rings anytime soon, but there's a lesson in this for all of us: Body parts can be even more effective than barbells for building strength. Balancing, hopping and holding are what Spring will rely on in competition in Beijing and what Dawes uses to maintain her physique in retirement. These are principles you can incorporate into what you do, too.

Dawes, 31, first learned this lesson at Hill's Gymnastics in Gaithersburg, Md., from owner Kelli Hill, who guided Dawes's career from 1982 to 2000 and coached the U.S. women's team for the 2004 Games in Athens. "Gymnastics is an incredible amount of work, and they make it look so easy," Hill says.

For the young elite gymnasts at Hill's, biceps curls aren't going to cut it. A handstand, however, will. "It requires a great deal of balance, shoulder strength and the ability to hold your body straight," Hill says. Another classic gymnastics move, the hollow hold, is killer for the core: Lying on their backs, they raise their legs slightly and roll their shoulders off the ground, so they're balancing on their lower backs—and then, for the hard part, they stay in that position.

Both of those moves are part of the Dawes routine today, which is still grueling but more sane (and shorter) than her former exercise schedule. "I don't need to train like I used to. Many times now, it's only 30 minutes a day," says Dawes, who lives in the Maryland suburbs but flits about the globe giving inspirational speeches and conducting gymnastics workshops.

Yet just like in the old days, Dawes's personal workouts often start with her favorite form of cardio, skipping rope. "I don't think people jump enough," she says. Perhaps it's no surprise that a woman who spent her childhood leaping off springboards continues to carry a torch for jumping. But Dawes thinks folks who keep their feet on the ground are missing out on an activity that's portable, cheap and a guaranteed calorie scorcher. Once she segues into strength, she adds jumps to squats and lunges, too. Always landing with perfect form, of course.

She still does triceps dips (sitting with her hands holding the edge of a chair, she shifts her tush forward into the air and then lowers down with her arms), mountain climbers (in push-up position, she picks up one knee and brings it toward her head, then switches) and tricky pistol squats (lowering herself down on one leg, then sitting on her butt, rolling back and standing up on the one leg again). And she'll never stop doing back bridges, except instead of kicking her leg into the air for a back walkover, it's part of her yoga practice.

More efficient way to train

By VICKY HALLETT
(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Q. I'm an active person (running, weight training, martial arts), so I'm not looking for an easy way to get fit. But I am always looking for more efficient or more effective ways to train. Several years ago, I started hearing about using vibration platforms, especially for building core strength. I remember that some of the NFL teams were using them. Nowadays, I don't hear about them anymore. Did they not catch on because they were not effective—or were they too expensive? Do you have any experience with these, or any info on them?

A. To find out what's shaking in the world of vibrations, I turned to William Amonette, an exercise physiologist at the University of Houston at Clear Lake who has been studying whole-body vibration since 2002.

Yes, that's right, there's a scientific field dedicated to exploring the potential of what is essentially Magic Fingers. And as you've heard, research indicates that jostling can do a body good: It improves bone density, ups flexibility and boosts one's power. It's that last part that has made it attractive to some football teams and, increasingly, to higher-end health clubs. (The platforms aren't cheap.)

But if it's abs strength you're after, I'd stick with sit-ups. "The plate does knock your center of gravity off," Amonette admits. "But how much core activation do you get? I don't know."

Vibration research is still in its infancy. And regardless of what the Beach Boys may have told you, all vibrations aren't good. People who operate jackhammers and drive trucks develop back and joint problems from too much shaking, Amonette says. So although some trainers recommend lengthy workouts on vibrating platforms, he advises exercisers to limit exposure. "It's a tool to incorporate into an overall training program," he says.

Depending on how the next few years of scientific study shake out, there's a chance you'll start to see WBV everywhere, especially as boomers face bone density issues. But to get rid of jiggle, it seems like you'll be better off using solid ground.

by Andrea Wyatt M.S.S., C.S.C.S.

Long plane ride can challenge body

Q: This summer I'll be taking my dream vacation to New Zealand. I have never flown on a plane for more than four hours, and even then my back and knees begin to bother me. A friend suggested I do exercises on the plane to keep from sitting down for so long. What type of exercises can I do in a cramped airplane?

A: Air travel can be a challenge, especially if you're sitting for long periods of time. The secret is to plan before your trip to avoid any discomfort while flying.

First, if you have any medical conditions or concerns, speak with your physician before you leave. Be sure to include the length of the airplane ride, stopovers, etc., so he or she will have the information needed to suggest a plan to help you have a smooth trip.

Next, begin by getting in shape as much as you can in the weeks leading up to your trip. The fitter you are, the more your body will be able to tolerate the long plane ride to New Zealand. Your muscles, bones and joints are not accustomed to sitting for extended periods of time, especially in the small confines of an airplane seat. The stronger your body, the better you'll feel upon arrival.

Cardiovascular, strength and flexibility exercises should all be part of your pre-trip exercise routine. Walking or jogging, a total-body strength training routine and flexibility exercises or classes such as Pilates or yoga can be a great combination. If you already have an exercise program, continue with your routine and add any needed exercises.

Remember to practice good posture in the weeks leading up to your trip. Try to develop a strong core—which includes your whole trunk region—and avoid slumping forwarding or leaning to the side while driving or sitting at home. Practicing these habits can help you develop the technique and strength to do this while on a plane. Poor posture while sitting can cause problems with your lower back, neck and shoulders. Sitting for hours on an airplane with this poor posture can begin to cause discomfort.

Once on the plane, remember to practice these good posture techniques and continue to move your legs, arms and neck throughout the flight. Many airlines offer exercise suggestions on in-flight screens to remind passengers to move around and move their limbs every hour.

Sleeping may seem like the best way to get through a long trip; however, if you plan to sleep, ask someone you are flying with or a flight attendant to wake you occasionally so you can get up and walk, stretch and get the blood flowing throughout your body. While sitting, you can move your legs, roll your ankles, stretch your wrist, shoulders and neck—and just keep moving.

Although the space is limited on an airplane, you can still move enough to keep your body strong and happy on your way to your dream vacation.

Always consult a physician before beginning an exercise program. If you have a fitness or training question, write to Andrea in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

Life & Style

Cloned puppies may have exposed 31-year mystery

By JENNIFER DOBNER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A woman who made news around the world when she had five pups cloned from her beloved pit bull Booger looked very familiar to some who saw her picture: She's the same woman who 31 years earlier was accused of abducting a Mormon missionary in England, handcuffing him to a bed and making him her sex slave.

Dog lover Bernann McKinney acknowledged in a telephone call to The Associated Press on Saturday that she is indeed Joyce McKinney, who in 1977 became a British tabloid sensation when she faced charges of unlawful imprisonment in the missionary case. She jumped bail and was never brought to justice.

Through tears, she explained that she went public with her efforts to replicate Booger, who died two years ago, hoping people would be able to focus on that story rather than the "garbage" of the past.

"I thought people would be honest enough to see me as a person who was trying to do something good and not as a celebrity," McKinney told the AP. "My mother always taught me, 'Say something good or say nothing at all.'"

"I think I gave people too much credit," she said.

British tabloids first recognized the blond woman's smiling face when she appeared in news photographs this past week with the five pit bull pups she paid South Korean scientists $53,000 to clone.

McKinney, who initially denied a connection between the two women, acknowledged that she was one and the same after the AP ran a story noting the striking similarities in arrest records and court documents for the names Bernann McKinney and Joyce McKinney. They had the same birth date and Social Security numbers, the same hometown of Newland, N.C., and Joyce McKinney's middle name is Bernann.

AP

Bernann McKinney, right, from the U.S. holds one of five cloned pitbull puppies beside a mother dog during her first meeting with them at the Seoul National University Hospital for Animals in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2008.

But the now-57-year-old McKinney said that, as far as she's concerned, the Joyce McKinney of 31 years ago doesn't exist. She maintains her innocence and says the woman of all those years ago is a "figment of the tabloid press. ... I don't want that garbage in with the puppy story."

The story of Joyce McKinney is the stuff of pulp fiction: a North Carolina-born beauty queen who moved west, won the title Miss Wyoming USA and went on to college at Brigham Young University, where she became obsessed with a Mormon fellow student.

When that young Mormon took a missionary trip to England, authorities say McKinney hired a private detective so she could locate and follow him.

She and a male accomplice were accused of abducting the 21-year-old missionary as he went door to door, taking him to a rented 17th-century "honeymoon cottage" in Devon and chaining him spread-eagle to a bed with several pairs of mink-lined handcuffs.

There, investigators say, he was repeatedly forced to have sex with McKinney before he was able to escape and notify police.

In a 1977 court hearing mobbed by the British press, Joyce McKinney said she'd fallen head-over-heels in love with the Mormon man and acknowledged tracking him to England. "I loved him so much," she told a judge, "that I would ski naked down Mount Everest in the nude with a carnation up my nose if he asked me to."

But she denied a sexual assault, saying the young man was a willing partner.

In her call to the AP on Saturday, McKinney repeated the same argument her lawyer made all those years ago: There's no way she could have overpowered the young Mormon because he was much bigger and stronger.

"I didn't rape no 300-pound man," she said. "He was built like a Green Bay Packer."

McKinney and her accomplice spent three months in a London jail before being released on bail.

Press reports at the time that said the pair then jumped bail, posing as deaf-mute actors in Ireland to board an Air Canada flight to Toronto and eventually a bus to Cleveland, where investigators lost their trail.

AP

This 1973 file photo shows former beauty queen Joyce McKinney representing Wyoming in the 1973 Miss World contest.

Joyce McKinney surfaced again in Utah in May 1984 and was arrested for allegedly stalking the workplace of the same Mormon man she was accused of imprisoning in England. News reports say that police found a length of rope and handcuffs in the trunk of McKinney's car, along with notebooks detailing the man's daily activities.

Set to stand trial for lying to police and harassment in 1986, McKinney again disappeared just before proceedings and the case was dismissed.

It now appears Joyce McKinney may have escaped justice in the long-ago British case also. London police told the AP they've consigned the case to the history books because of its age and won't seek McKinney's extradition.

"They don't have a case," she told the AP. "It's been 31 years. They don't care."

"It's taken years of therapy to get past this," she said. "We go to church and serve the Lord and try to lead good lives and do good things."

McKinney refused to say where she was when she called. While in South Korea, she told reporters she was a screenwriter and handed out business cards with a Hollywood, Calif., address. The AP found that address did not exist.

At the Avery County courthouse in McKinney's hometown of Newland in the western North Carolina mountains, a clerk said she instantly recognized the woman snuggling puppies as the Joyce Bernann McKinney who has been a frequent defendant in court cases there.

"She is a person of note in our little community," said clerk Julia Henson.

Avery County Sheriff Kevin Frey said there are several charges on file against Joyce McKinney, including an active warrant seeking her arrest on a 2003 charge of communicating a threat against another woman.

Other charges include passing bad checks, an assault on a public officials and an 2004 animal cruelty charge alleging she failed to take proper care of a horse. That charge was dismissed.

James Stamey, the husband of the woman McKinney was charged with threatening, said that McKinney left Newland about two years ago and that no one had really seen or heard from her.

Until she showed up in the news about the cloned puppies.

"That's our Joy," Stamey said from his home in Newland.

Years ago, Stamey said, McKinney was a beautiful girl worthy of the Miss Wyoming USA crown.

"She's ugly as sin now," he said. "But, sure enough, that's her."

Group promotes New Orleans anthem

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Kevin Molony was listening to a version of the old spiritual "I Shall Not Be Moved," when it struck him as the perfect anthem for New Orleans residents still struggling to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

The song, which served as a battle cry for the union movement in the 1930s and the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s, seemed particularly relevant for those clinging fiercely to lives wrecked by the deadly storm almost three years ago.

"That line, 'Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved,'" Molony said on Friday. "It seemed to sum up what everyone struggling to come back after Katrina was feeling. I really wanted to bring the city together with that thought."

Molony founded a nonprofit agency aimed at audio and video production of the slightly altered song. He describes it as a New Orleans version of "We Are the World" - a song recorded in 1985 by an elite group of artists whose goal was to raise funds to help famine-relief efforts in Ethiopia.

In what he calls the "folk tradition of adapting and transforming songs to serve as anthems to galvanize people in a cause," Molony made a few modifications. He adopted a version, sung by the unions and civil rights marchers, that changed the song's pronoun to "We." Then he lined up 12 New Orleans musicians, including Charmaine Neville and John Boutte, along with groups ranging from gospel choruses to the New Orleans Opera Choir and recorded a CD of the song.

"It's very emotional for everybody," said singer Topsy Chapman, who sang on the CD with daughters Yolanda Windsay and Jolinda Phillips. "Everything has changed since Katrina. Even our neighborhoods aren't familiar anymore."

Both of Chapman's daughters' houses were submerged by Katrina's flooding. Chapman said the first floor of her own home flooded. She lost all the gowns and shoes she used in performances, as well as other possessions.

Chapman, who was in "One Mo' Time" on Broadway, just moved back into her renovated house two months ago.

Julie Condy directs the Crescent City Lights Youth Theater Chorus, which also took part. Since the storm, music has been a saving experience for the kids in her group, she said.

Lincoln's hometown marks 100th anniversary of riot

AP

In this 1908 file photo released by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, one of 40-black-owned homes destroyed by rioters burns in Springfield, Ill. The riot and lynching in Springfield helped inspire the creation of the NAACP.

By CHRISTOPHER WILLS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Two days of terror. Black men tortured and hanged. A baby dead of exposure. Four white rioters shot by black defenders.

It wasn't America's first riot, and certainly not the last.

But this one was in the hometown of Abraham Lincoln, the president who helped end slavery.

Today, Lincoln's city—where Barack Obama launched his campaign to become the first black president—is finally commemorating the events that erupted 100 years ago this month.

At the time, even respectable citizens came out to gawk at the smoldering rubble and a body hanging from a tree.

"His feet dangling and within reach ... the men and boys played with the corpse by swinging it back and forth against the building to hear the dull thud," a local newspaper reported.

Outraged activists helped form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in response to this "race war in the north."

"It wasn't in Mississippi, it was in Illinois. That jarred people," said Roger Wilkins, publisher of the NAACP's The Crisis magazine. "Add the fact that it's where Lincoln is buried. You have a lot of symbolism. Lincoln was a live memory to a lot of people."

Then the riot simply faded into history.

Nationally, it was overshadowed by larger riots in East St. Louis, and in Tulsa, Okla.

And for generations, it was studiously ignored in Springfield.

Tamara Douglass, an African-American high school teacher, grew up in Springfield but didn't hear a word about the riot until a professor mentioned it in college.

"I was angry," she said. "I found it hypocritical that in this town it's all about Lincoln, we want to embrace him. Then you find out—whoah!—this is who we are. THIS is Springfield."

The violence began on Aug. 14, 1908, after a bit of trickery that saved two lives.

An angry crowd gathered outside the Sangamon County jail demanding that two black prisoners—one held on murder charges and the other accused (but later cleared) of rape—be turned over to them.

Instead, the sheriff had the nearby fire station ring its alarm to distract the crowd and then hustled the prisoners out the back door and into a waiting car, which took them to safety.

Furious at being tricked, the crowd took vengeance on the man who had driven the prisoners to safety, Harry Loper. They burned his car, then looted and demolished his restaurant.

In the frenzy, one man was killed, apparently shot to death.

Then the crowd, several thousand strong, turned its fury on the city's black residents, tearing through the red-light district known as the Levee and burning black-owned businesses.

Next, they attacked a largely residential neighborhood known as the Badlands. They bypassed homes with sheets hanging outside, signaling that whites lived there, but torched black homes and beat their owners.

Scott Burton, a 56-year-old barber, tried to hold the mob at bay with a shotgun, but they grabbed him after he had fired a couple of rounds. Someone got a clothesline from a nearby house, and they hanged Burton from a tree.

Then they mutilated his body and halted only when members of the state militia showed up and fired into the crowd.

Most black families fled to the militia's arsenal or hid in fields and forests, where at least one baby died in the August heat. Some sympathetic whites offered refuge.

Other black residents armed themselves and fought back. Four rioters were killed.

In an interview decades later, Edith Carpenter recalled that her father patrolled with guns visible.

"I'll let you know they never bothered him," she said. "All day and all night long, he had a gun on each shoulder and he marched from where our store was ... to our home, and that was back and forth all evening."

The next day, Aug. 15, the rioters regrouped as darkness fell, but soldiers turned them back as they headed for another black neighborhood and the arsenal where hundreds of blacks were taking shelter.

The mob then headed to the home of 84-year-old William Donnegan, a retired cobbler who had worked for Lincoln and who was married to a white woman.

Just a short block from the state Capitol, the mob hauled Donnegan from his home, slashed his throat and hanged him. He was still alive when the militia arrived and cut him down, but he died the next day.

The riots led to 107 indictments and 85 arrests. But witnesses, either sympathetic to the rioters or intimidated by them, were hard to find. One mob leader killed herself rather than stand trial. One man was sentenced to 30 days in jail for stealing a sword from a black veteran, and a teenager was sent to a reformatory for a few months.

The city power structure quickly played down the riot.

"This was not a race war at all," one newspaper claimed. In decades to come, the obituaries for key participants—including the sheriff whose protection of his prisoners helped trigger the violence—would contain no mention of the riot.

Not until the 1990s were markers erected on the sites of important locations in the violence.

"It's a history that has to be brought out into the open. It really has to be," said Garret Moffett, who leads walking tours of those locations. "The martyrs of the riot should be remembered."

This summer, black and white churches have held a series of assemblies to remember the riot. The local ministerial alliance arranged for billboards proclaiming "All races welcome here!"

The Lincoln Presidential Library is hosting an exhibit on the riot and offered a summer program for high school students to research the topic. Events marking the centennial are scheduled in coming weeks.

Mayor Timothy Davlin issued a formal apology for the riot and "the lingering consequences of the misdeeds."

Who should doctor let die in a pandemic? Report offers answers

By LINDSEY TANNERAP
MEDICAL WRITER

CHICAGO (AP)—Doctors know some patients needing lifesaving care won't get it in a flu pandemic or other disaster. The gut-wrenching dilemma will be deciding who to let die. Now, an influential group of physicians has drafted a grimly specific list of recommendations for which patients wouldn't be treated. They include the very elderly, seriously hurt trauma victims, severely burned patients and those with severe dementia.

The suggested list was compiled by a task force whose members come from prestigious universities, medical groups, the military and government agencies. They include the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The proposed guidelines are designed to be a blueprint for hospitals "so that everybody will be thinking in the same way" when pandemic flu or another widespread health care disaster hits, said Dr. Asha Devereaux. She is a critical care specialist in San Diego and lead writer of the task force report.

The idea is to try to make sure that scarce resources - including ventilators, medicine and doctors and nurses - are used in a uniform, objective way, task force members said.

Their recommendations appear in a report appearing Monday in the May edition of Chest, the medical journal of the American College of Chest Physicians.

ON THE NET

- CHEST: http://www.chestjournal.org
- U.S. Govt.: http://www.pandemicflu.gov

"If a mass casualty critical care event were to occur tomorrow, many people with clinical conditions that are survivable under usual health care system conditions may have to forgo life-sustaining interventions owing to deficiencies in supply or staffing," the report states.

To prepare, hospitals should designate a triage team with the Godlike task of deciding who will and who won't get lifesaving care, the task force wrote. Those out of luck are the people at high risk of death and a slim chance of long-term survival. But the recommendations get much more specific, and include:

- People older than 85.
- Those with severe trauma, which could include critical injuries from car crashes and shootings.
- Severely burned patients older than 60.
- Those with severe mental impairment, which could include advanced Alzheimer's disease.
- Those with a severe chronic disease, such as advanced heart failure, lung disease or poorly controlled diabetes.

Dr. Kevin Yeskey, director of the preparedness and emergency operations office at the Department of Health and Human Services, was on the task force. He said the report would be among many the agency reviews as part of preparedness efforts.

Public health law expert Lawrence Gostin of Georgetown University called the report an important initiative but also "a political minefield and a legal minefield."

The recommendations would probably violate federal laws against age discrimination and disability discrimination, said Gostin, who was not on the task force.

If followed to a tee, such rules could exclude care for the poorest, most disadvantaged citizens who suffer disproportionately from chronic disease and disability, he said. While health care rationing will be necessary in a mass disaster, "there are some real ethical concerns here."

James Bentley, a senior vice president at American Hospital Association, said the report will give guidance to hospitals in shaping their own preparedness plans even if they don't follow all the suggestions.

He said the proposals resemble a battlefield approach in which limited health care resources are reserved for those most likely to survive.

Bentley said it's not the first time this type of approach has been recommended for a catastrophic pandemic, but that "this is the most detailed one I have seen from a professional group."

While the notion of rationing health care is unpleasant, the report could help the public understand that it will be necessary, Bentley said.

Actor, comedian Bernie Mac dies at 50

By FRAZIER MOORE
AP TELEVISION WRITER

Bernie Mac blended style, authority and a touch of self-aware bluster to make audiences laugh as well as connect with him. For Mac, who died Saturday at age 50, it was a winning mix, delivering him from a poor childhood to stardom as a standup comedian, in films including the casino heist caper "Ocean's Eleven" and his acclaimed sitcom "The Bernie Mac Show."

Though his comedy drew on tough experiences as a black man, he had mainstream appeal—befitting inspiration he found in a wide range of humorists: Harpo Marx as well as Moms Mabley; squeaky-clean Red Skelton, but also the raw Redd Foxx.

Mac died Saturday morning of complications from pneumonia in a Chicago-area hospital, his publicist, Danica Smith, said in a statement from Los Angeles.

"The world just got a little less funny," said "Oceans" co-star George Clooney.

Don Cheadle, another member of the "Oceans" gang, concurred: "This is a very sad day for many of us who knew and loved Bernie. He brought so much joy to so many. He will be missed, but heaven just got funnier."

Mac suffered from sarcoidosis, an inflammatory lung disease that produces tiny lumps of cells in the body's organs, but had said the condition went into remission in 2005. He recently was hospitalized and treated for pneumonia, which his publicist said was not related to the disease.

Recently, Mac's brand of comedy caught him flack when he was heckled during a surprise appearance at a July fundraiser for Democratic presidential candidate and fellow Chicagoan Barack Obama.

Toward the end of a 10-minute standup routine, Mac joked about menopause, sexual infidelity and promiscuity, and used occasional crude language. Obama took the stage about 15 minutes later, implored Mac to "clean up your act next time," then let him off the hook, adding: "By the way, I'm just messing with you, man."

Even so, Obama's campaign later issued a rebuke, saying the senator "doesn't condone these statements and believes what was said was inappropriate."

But despite controversy or difficulties, in his words, Mac was always a performer.

"Wherever I am, I have to play," he said in 2002. "I have to put on a good show."

Mac worked his way to Hollywood success from an impoverished upbringing on Chicago's South Side. He began doing standup as a child, telling jokes for spare change on subways, and his film career started with a small role as a club doorman in the Damon Wayans comedy "Mo' Money" in 1992. In 1996, he appeared in the Spike Lee drama "Get on the Bus."

He was one of "The Original Kings of Comedy" in the 2000 documentary of that title that brought a new generation of black standup comedy stars to a wider audience.

"The majority of his core fan base will remember that when they paid their money to see Bernie Mac ... he gave them their money's worth," Steve Harvey, one of his co-stars in "Original Kings," told CNN on Saturday.

Mac went on to star in the hugely popular "Ocean's Eleven" franchise with Brad Pitt and George Clooney, playing a gaming-table dealer who was in on the heist. Carl Reiner, who also appeared in the "Ocean's" films, said Saturday he was "in utter shock" because he thought Mac's health was improving.

"He was just so alive," Reiner said. "I can't believe he's gone."

Mac and Ashton Kutcher topped the box office in 2005's "Guess Who," a comedy remake of the classic Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn drama "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" Mac played the dad who's shocked that his daughter is marrying a white man.

Mac also had starring roles in "Bad Santa," "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle" and "Transformers."

But his career and comic identity were forged in television.

In the late 1990s, he had a recurring role in "Moesha," the UPN network comedy starring pop star Brandy. The critical and popular acclaim came after he landed his own Fox television series "The Bernie Mac Show," about a child-averse couple who suddenly are saddled with three children.

Mac mined laughs from the universal frustrations of parenting, often breaking the "fourth wall" to address the camera throughout the series that aired from 2001 to 2006. "C'mon, America," implored Mac, in character as the put-upon dad. "When I say I wanna kill those kids, YOU know what I mean."

The series won a Peabody Award in 2002, and Mac was nominated for a Golden Globe and an Emmy. In real life, he was "the king of his household"—very much like his character on that series, his daughter, Je'niece Childress, told The Associated Press on Saturday.

"But television handcuffs you, man," he said in a 2001 Associated Press interview before the show had premiered. "Now everyone telling me what I CAN'T do, what I CAN say, what I SHOULD do, and asking, 'Are blacks gonna be mad at you? Are whites gonna accept you?'"

He also was nominated for a Grammy award for best comedy album in 2001 along with his "The Original Kings of Comedy" co-stars Harvey, D.L. Hughley and Cedric The Entertainer.

AP

In this Dec. 4, 2001 file photo, comedian Bernie Mac poses for photographers backstage at the 2001 Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas.

Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish is dead at 67

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Mahmoud Darwish, a Palestinian cultural icon whose poetry eloquently told of his people's experiences of exile, occupation and infighting, died Saturday in Houston. He was 67.

The predominant Palestinian poet, whose work has been translated into more than 20 languages and won numerous international awards, died following open heart surgery at a Houston hospital, said Nabil Abu Rdeneh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Born to a large Muslim family in historical Palestine —now modern-day Israel—he described his people's struggle for independence while also criticizing both the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian leadership. He gave voice to the Palestinian dreams of statehood, crafted their declaration of independence and helped forge a Palestinian national identity.

Darwish

"He felt the pulse of Palestinians in beautiful poetry. He was a mirror of the Palestinian society," said Ali Qleibo, a Palestinian anthropologist and lecturer in cultural studies at Al Quds University in Jerusalem.

Darwish first gained prominence in the 1960s with the publication of his first poetry collection, "Bird without Wings." It included the poem "Identity Card" that defiantly spoke in the first person of an Arab man giving his identity number—a common practice among Palestinians when dealing with Israeli authorities and Arab governments—and vowing to return to his land.

Many of his poems have been put into music—most notably "Rita," "Birds of Galilee" and "I yearn for my mother's bread"—and have become anthems for at least two generations of Arabs.

He wrote another 21 collections, the last, "The Impression of Butterflies," in 2008.

Qleibo described Darwish's poetry as "the easy impossible," for Darwish's ability to condense the Palestinian narrative into simple, evocative language—breaking away from the more traditional heavy, emotive and rhythmic verse of other Arab poets.

Darwish wrote the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988, read by the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat when he unilaterally declared statehood. The declaration was symbolic and had no concrete significance.

Darwish's influence was keenly felt among Palestinians, serving as a powerful voice for many.

"He started out as a poet of resistance and then he became a poet of conscience," said Palestinian lawmaker Hanan Ashrawi. "He embodied the best in Palestinians ... even though he became iconic he never lost his sense of humanity. We have lost part of our essence, the essence of the Palestinian being."

Last year, Darwish recited a poem damning the deadly infighting between rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah, describing it as "a public attempt at suicide in the streets."

Darwish was born in the Palestinian village of Birweh near Haifa, which was destroyed in the 1948 Mideast war that led to Israel's independence. He joined the Israeli Communist Party after high school and began writing poems for leftist newspapers.

"When we think of Darwish ... he is our heart, and our tongue," said Issam Makhoul, an Arab lawmaker and veteran member of the Israeli Communist Party.

Darwish left Israel in the early 1970s to study in the former Soviet Union, and from there he traveled to Egypt and Lebanon. He joined the Palestine Liberation Organization, but resigned in 1993 in protest over the interim peace accords that the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat signed with Israel. Darwish moved to the West Bank city of Ramallah in 1996.

His work is widely admired on the Arab and Palestinian street. In Israel, it evokes different feelings.

In 2000, Israel's education minister, Yossi Sarid, suggested including some of Darwish's poems in the Israeli high school curriculum. But Prime Minister Ehud Barak overruled him, saying Israel was not ready yet for his ideas in the school system.

In 1988, a Darwish poem, "Passing in Passing Words," was read by then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir inside Israel's parliament as an example of the Palestinians' unwillingness to live alongside Jews. The poem suggested that Darwish called for Jews to leave the region.

Adel Usta, a specialist on Darwish's poetry, said the poem was misunderstood and mistranslated.

"He created a national Palestinian identity that no other poet could achieve," Usta said.

Darwish married and divorced twice. He does not have any children.

Siham Daoud, a fellow poet and longtime friend of Darwish, said he traveled to a hospital in Houston, Texas, ten days ago for the surgery and asked not to be resuscitated if it did not succeed.

Opening night big TV draw for NBC

NEW YORK (AP)—The colorful Olympics opening night ceremony from Beijing on NBC averaged 34.2 million viewers, making it the biggest television event since the Super Bowl.

It was the biggest audience ever for an Olympic opening ceremony not held in the U.S., and even eclipsed this year's Academy Awards and finale of "American Idol," Nielsen Media Research said on Saturday.

The numbers were all the more impressive since it was a Friday night in August, when many people have better things to do than watch TV. If they do choose to watch TV, the number of options are growing year by year, meaning most television events typically go down in ratings.

The most recent summer Olympics, in Athens four years ago, averaged 25.4 million viewers for its first night, Nielsen said. Sydney in 2000 had 27.3 million viewers.

"It was a magical and memorable spectacle and a great way to start the Beijing Olympics," said Dick Ebersol, chairman of NBC Universal Sports and Olympics.

It was good news for NBC and its advertisers, particularly since there was concern Friday about computer users finding ways to access non-NBC video feeds and watch portions of the ceremony before it appeared on the network. Due to the time difference, NBC aired the ceremony in the eastern U.S. 12 hours after it happened in China.

Instead, the tape delay may have helped NBC, allowing word of mouth to spread about the spell-binding ceremony, which featured an estimated 15,000 cast and crew members, many performing intricate dance moves with images that used Beijing's new stadium as a backdrop.

NBC's Olympics Web site didn't air video of the event before it was shown on TV, but it and many other Web sites did post still pictures. NBCOlympics.com registered 70 million page views on Friday, its heaviest traffic ever.

NBC Universal said it was working with Olympics officials to make sure video of events for which NBC has exclusive U.S. rights are not shown on other Web sites, network spokeswoman Kathy Kelly-Brown said.

Olympic authorities provide rights-holders with technology that prevents its coverage of Olympic events from being seen outside of their country. However, there were reports that the blocking technology didn't work for Germany's ARD network, allowing video to slip out beyond that country's borders.

After opening night, NBC is less concerned about video getting out, at least for the first week of the games. NBC's prime-time for the next week is concentrating on live events like gymnastics and Michael Phelps' bid for swimming immortality. Many other events are shown live on NBC Universal's cable networks or on NBC's Web site.

However, the second week of the games may present NBC with more of a problem. It currently plans to air most track and field events on tape-delay in prime-time, allowing for the possibility that pictures will slip out early.

AP

Fireworks explodes over the National Stadium or "Bird's Nest" during the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympics in the National Stadium in Beijing, Friday, Aug. 8, 2008.

The cash-strapped Fort Ticonderoga weighs selling art

TICONDEROGA, N.Y. (AP)—Fort Ticonderoga, one of the nation's oldest and most significant historic sites, is so financially strapped that its trustees are considering selling off some of the fort's vast collection of artifacts, including artwork believed to be worth millions.

The move comes after the fort lost the support of billionaire Forrest E. Mars Jr. amid disagreements with Fort Ticonderoga's longtime executive director, Nicholas Westbrook.

Besides being a privately owned tourist attraction operated as a not-for-profit, Fort Ticonderoga is also a state-chartered museum. Museum charters are granted by regents who must approve any sale of artifacts or artwork.

Peter Paine Jr., the new president of the board of trustees for the Fort Ticonderoga Association, sent a memo last month to board members outlining the financial crunch and listing several options to try to erase about $2.5 million in debt. Among them was closing next year and selling "Gelyna, View Near Ticonderoga," painted by Thomas Cole after he visited Ticonderoga in the 1820s. Other Cole works have sold for more than $1 million.

Fort Ticonderoga, a National Historic Landmark, played a key role in North American history from its construction by the French in 1755 through the American Revolution, when it changed hands three times. The bloodiest battle of the French and Indian War was fought there 250 years ago, and Benedict Arnold, along with Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys, famously captured the fort from the British in 1775 without firing a shot.

Chuck Berry's house rocks

ST. LOUIS (AP)—A modest, one-story red-brick house that rock and roll legend Chuck Berry bought in 1950 will be considered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Experts on St. Louis landmarks say Berry and his family lived in the home in the city's Ville neighborhood during his most productive early songwriting period.

It was in the house that Berry developed his distinctive guitar style, rehearsed, wrote and recorded many of his classic songs including "Maybelline," "Johnny B. Goode," and "Roll Over Beethoven." Berry sold the house in 1958.

On Friday, the Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation recommended the house for inclusion on the National Register.

Pregnant Netrebko withdraws from Met 'Boheme'

NEW YORK (AP)—Soprano Anna Netrebko is extending her pregnancy leave and has withdrawn from performances of Puccini's "La Boheme" at the Metropolitan Opera in December and January.

Netrebko, 36, announced in February that she and her fiance, Uruguayan baritone Erwin Schrott, were expecting, and the Met said Friday she is due to give birth next month.

"She has decided that she will need a few more weeks than originally planned to be ready for her return to the stage," the Met said.

Netrebko

Netrebko's final performance before her maternity leave was a June 27 concert in Vienna, Austria, and she withdrew from a highly anticipated new production of Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette" at Austria's Salzburg Festival.

A Met revival of Massenet's "Manon" was changed to "La Boheme" after she became pregnant, and she withdrew from the first four performances while still planning to sing on Dec. 29, and Jan. 3, Jan. 6 and Jan. 10.

Netrebko now plans to return to performing with a revival of Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" at the Met on Jan. 26 and Jan. 29, and Feb. 3 and Feb. 7. The final performance is scheduled for a movie-theater simulcast and radio broadcast.

Standing up to sitter stealer won't solve woman's problem

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My friend stole my baby sitter! It began when "Mimi" asked for the name of our sitter. She didn't have one and said she would be confident using the girl we were using. She explained that it would be only to "occasionally" relieve her parents, who usually looked after the kids. Unlike Mimi, we have no family in town.

Now, every time we are invited to attend something, I call our sitter and she has already been booked by my "friend." Mimi even books the girl when she invites US out! I have mentioned on a couple of occasions that we couldn't go because she had already booked our sitter. Her response? "Maybe you should check the baby-sitter list at the gym and find someone else."

Our husbands work together and we share many of the same friends. I considered Mimi a good friend, but now I feel used. This has been going on for four months. I'm afraid I may explode the next time I see her. How should I handle this? Mimi acts as if there is no problem.

FEELS LIKE A FOOL, GAINESVILLE, FLA.

DEAR FEELS LIKE A FOOL: Mimi is acting like there is no problem because there IS no problem—for Mimi. You have assessed the situation correctly. She did use you. If I had to make a guess, Mimi is monopolizing your sitter because her parents have decided they have been good sports and watched the kids to the point that they would like a social life of their own.

I'm sorry, but the way to handle this is to find another sitter. And next time don't be so generous in sharing your resources with Mimi. (The same goes for your hairdresser and your house cleaner if you have one.)

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My partner and I have been together 10 years. We are both in our mid-40s. We have an 8-year-old daughter, but lost our 3-year-old son to cancer two years ago.

We decided to become foster parents in the hope of adopting a child. Two months ago, we took in a 3 1/2-year- old little boy. We were told he was "slightly delayed" in his development but have now discovered that he is functioning at the level of an 18-month-old. The neurologist told us the child may progress—or not.

At this point in my life I do not have the strength or patience to deal with a child with such special needs. I have expressed my concerns to my partner, but she wants to give it more time. I feel the longer we have him, though, the harder it will be for all of us if it does not work out.

I already have three grown children and one grandchild. I want to devote my energy to our 8-year-old, who is still coping with the loss of her brother. Please give me an objective opinion.

STRESSED IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR STRESSED: Because you are unable to give the little boy the love and support he needs, admit it now and return him to the state. He may be better off with a special family that has experience in raising children with developmental disabilities.

That you were not given accurate information about the boy is deplorable, but the longer you wait, the more complicated the situation will become—not only for you, but also for your impressionable daughter, who may need professional help to understand why you did it, that it is no threat to her, and reassurance that children are not interchangeable.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ALL YOUR DAD'S TOOLS IN THE BATHROOM?
THIS FAUCET DRIPS, SO I'M GOING TO FIX IT.
YOU'RE GOING TO FIX IT?
THAT'S WHAT I SAID.
...AND YOU CAN KEEP YOUR COMMENTS TO YOURSELF, DR. DOOM.
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
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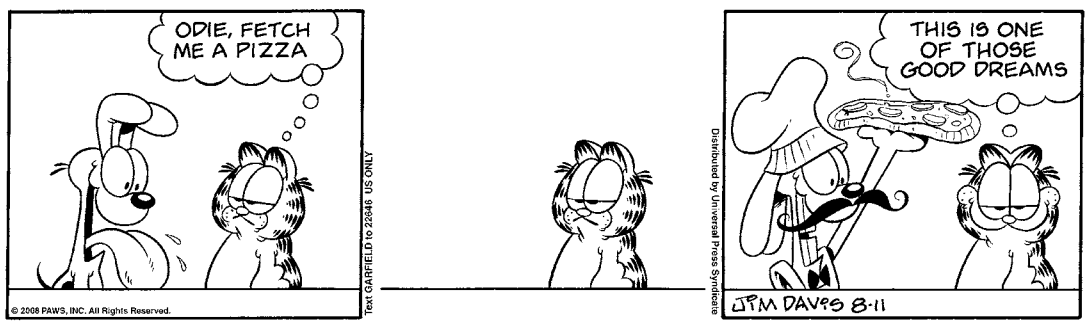
WATTERSON
8/11

Garfield®

By Jim Davis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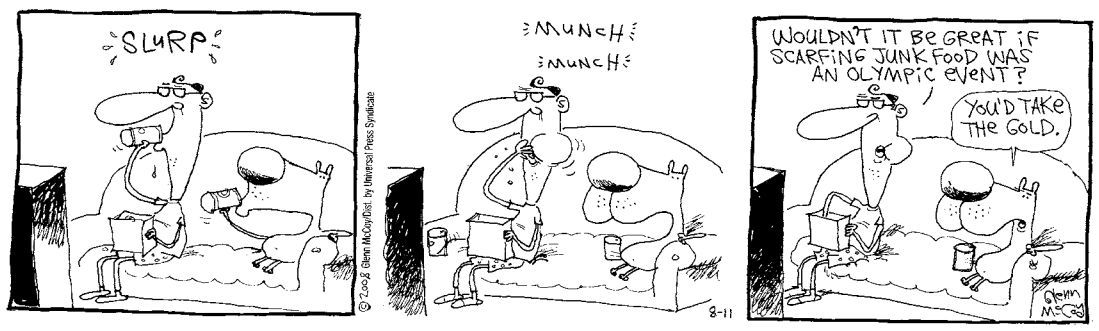
JIM DAVIS 8-11

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

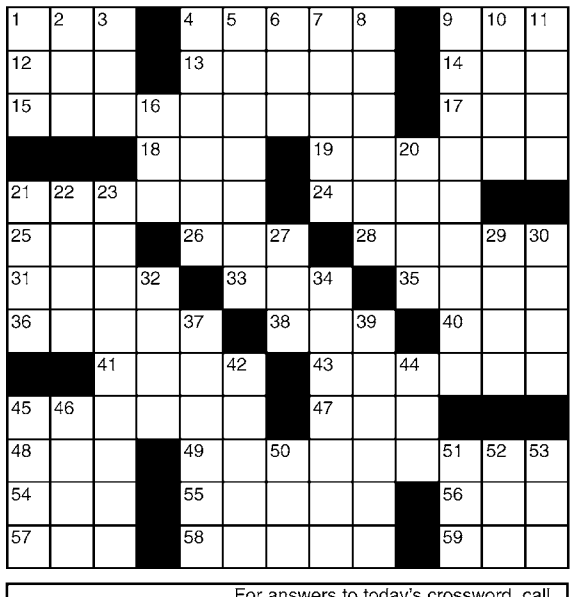
ACROSS
1 Make inquiries
4 Is unsuccessful
9 Historic period
12 Life's story
13 Violinist's stroke
14 Moving truck
15 Declare not guilty
17 Performance
18 "The Greatest"
19 Chinese capital
21 City on the St. Lawrence
24 "Beetle Bailey" dog
25 Web address
26 "— good deed"
28 "Get lost!"
31 Culture medium
33 Numerical prefix
35 Hearty partner
36 Left-side ledger entry
38 Sra., across the Pyrenees
40 Golf gadget
41 Ahs' mates
43 One of the clergy
45 "No Exit" author
47 1946 nuke org.
48 Spy-novel grp.
49 Speak clearly
54 Illustrations
55 Good quality
56 Light touch
57 "See ya"
58 Transactions
59 Long sandwich

DOWN
1 Presidential nickname
2 Pack quantity
3 "Kitchy-—!"
4 Gassed up
5 Type of fruit
6 Basketball coach Hank
7 Gambling game
8 Workout wear
9 Turn to gas
10 Track competition
11 Opposed to
16 Apprehend
20 Pruritus
21 Campus section
22 Inner drive
23 Complex
27 Branch
29 Pub glassfuls
30 Encounter
32 Pandemonium
34 Put on a jury
37 Seamstress' need
39 Builds
42 Just know
44 Here (Fr.)
45 Wound cover
46 Ethereal
50 Can. neighbor
51 Billboards
52 Sigma follower
53 Recede

Solution time: 24 mins.

E	M	S	■	R	O	A	D	■	X	M	A	S
R	A	P	■	U	R	G	E	■	Y	E	L	P
A	G	O	■	B	I	O	S	■	L	A	I	R
S	I	T	T	I	N	G	P	R	E	T	T	Y
■	■	■	■	R	E	G	■	I	A	M	■	■
K	U	D	O	S	■	S	T	Y	■	F	L	U
E	K	E	D	■	T	O	E	■	D	I	A	S
Y	E	W	■	G	E	L	■	P	E	N	C	E
■	■	■	■	C	O	Q	■	S	U	M	■	■
U	G	L	Y	D	U	C	K	L	I	N	G	S
N	O	O	N	■	I	R	I	S	■	I	R	E
T	O	R	I	■	L	A	M	E	■	C	A	R
O	P	E	C	■	A	M	P	S	■	E	Y	E

Saturday's answer 8-11



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: J-Boog, 23; Ashley Jensen, 39; Joe Rogan, 41; Hulk Hogan, 55

Happy Birthday: Think matters through, especially when dealing with money, and you will have no regrets or worries. Listening and taking direction will help you, even if you don't like to do either. Let others take the lead this year, as you observe and tweak the plans you have for next year. Your numbers are 6, 13, 24, 33, 42, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You have a lot of drive today and will have plenty of energy left over to do something adventurous and challenging later in the day. A short trip will pay off in the information you gather. An opportunity is up for grabs. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Watch your spending and, if someone tries to borrow or asks for financial assistance, make suggestions instead of giving cash. A chance to get involved in something that interests you will surface. Make time for love, family and friends. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You may be pulled into an emotional situation that will leave you in an awkward position. Meddling will backfire and will result in sudden losses of friendship if you aren't careful. Just be a sounding board today. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You may be upset about changes taking place with colleagues, friends or peers. Focus on the positive and the people to whom you are closest. You have more to work with than you think. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Look on the bright side; people respond better to the positive. There is an important partnership in the making that will allow you to move in a direction that you've wanted to go for some time. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't let your emotions cause you to do something you may regret. A personal issue with your love, children or a parent will be difficult to deal with. Put more emphasis on yourself and how you can ease stress and anxiety. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Pick up any slack that you encounter because of others' irresponsibility or lack of knowledge and you will move into a key position today. Don't let anyone put blame on you for something you didn't do. Position yourself for success. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): All you have to do is ask and you will get the help you need. Sudden good fortune is in your corner. Love and romance should be penciled in for the evening hours. Past regrets can be amended with a phone call and good faith. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll have to think on your feet and be ready to counteract anything incriminating that comes up. Don't take chances while discussing important matters or while traveling. Mishaps are likely if you aren't paying attention. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): There is nothing to stop you from obtaining your dreams, hopes and wishes. Expect a gift, winning or good fortune to find its way into your life. Someone who is jealous may try to block your progress. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Your humanitarian side should kick in and help a cause that you believe in. It's time to give back in a big way, so start offering what you've learned from past experience. You will make a difference to someone who, in turn, will respect you. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): There will be plenty of action going on around you. Play by the rules or someone will call your bluff. An emotional matter will get out of hand quickly if you don't compromise. Prepare to make amends, apologize and accept the blame. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have great vision and intuition. You are emotional, passionate and quick to change from one thing to another. Strength of character will enable you to succeed.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

4	9							3
		3		1	4			7
			8	3	9		2	
	3	2	9		8	7		
	6	7				3	4	
		8	3		7	9	5	
	5		4	8	6			
7			5	2		6		
2							3	5

Difficulty Level ★ 8/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	8	1	3	5	7	4	9	2
3	5	9	2	4	8	7	6	1
7	2	4	9	6	1	8	3	5
8	1	7	6	3	5	2	4	9
5	4	6	1	2	9	3	7	8
2	9	3	8	7	4	5	1	6
1	3	8	7	9	2	6	5	4
4	6	2	5	1	3	9	8	7
9	7	5	4	8	6	1	2	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 8/09

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CRUISES **Solution: 8 letters**

N	L	C	B	G	N	I	N	I	D	A	T	S	O	C
S	O	A	A	A	D	R	A	N	U	C	A	B	I	N
E	U	I	T	R	L	(D)	(E)	(C)	(K)	M	A	T	E	P
R	N	I	T	S	N	C	C	N	T	R	O	P	O	U
V	G	A	T	A	Y	I	O	R	S	X	S	O	C	G
I	E	S	L	E	K	R	V	N	E	Y	L	A	R	N
C	S	L	S	A	W	R	C	A	Y	T	S	M	P	I
E	O	S	A	E	S	H	A	A	L	I	A	I	M	S
H	T	C	G	M	C	K	D	B	N	R	I	W	S	I
P	R	I	I	A	R	N	A	O	M	B	L	S	I	U
A	A	L	E	X	A	O	I	R	O	E	I	H	R	R
N	V	B	A	R	E	P	F	R	E	L	N	I	U	C
A	E	A	E	Y	E	M	I	T	P	E	G	P	O	R
M	L	V	N	N	O	I	S	R	U	C	X	E	T	E
A	T	E	N	D	E	R	E	S	E	R	V	E	D	W

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Alaska, Balcony, Bars, Beach, Cabin, Carnival, Casino, Celebrity, Costa, Crew, Cruising, Crystal, Cunard, Deck, Dining, Embarkation, Excursion, Exotic, Formal, Holland, Lounges, Mexico, Norwegian, Ocean, Panama, Pool, Port, Princess, Reserved, Room, Royal, Sailing, Seas, Service, Ship, Spas, Suite, Swim, Tender, Time, Tourism, Travel, Veranda, Water

Last Saturday's Answer: Programmable

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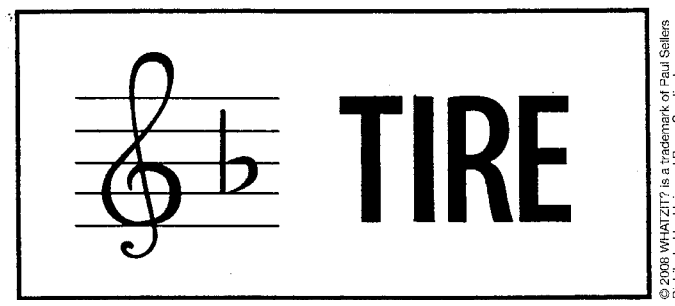
WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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Romero leads storm-stalled PGA

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)—All it took was one record-tying round and several claps of thunder for Oakland Hills to finally look vulnerable Saturday in the PGA Championship.

Andres Romero kept his calm and played a third round he described as "almost perfect" in making seven birdies to become only the seventh player to shoot 5-under 65 in a major at Oakland Hills.

Then came Mother Nature, who really brought "The Monster" to its knees.

Thunderstorms swamped the golf course before 36-hole leader J.B. Holmes and five guys chasing him could even tee off. More than four hours later, the PGA of America told everyone to return Sunday for what could be the first 36-hole final at a major in more than 40 years.

"It will be like college again—playing 36 in one day," Holmes said. "It happens, and everyone else has to do it, too. So we just have to go out there and deal with it. They've got 12 hours to work on the golf course, and it needed the rain.

"We'll see what it looks like tomorrow."

The rain could reshape the character of the final major. Holmes was at 1-under 139, the only player to beat par over two days, but so much rain was sure to take the fire out of the Donald Ross greens that had made players be on the defensive.

"I think it is fair to say they will be significantly more receptive," said Kerry Haigh, the PGA official in charge of setting up the course.

Former U.S. Open champion Angel Cabrera ripped a 3-wood down the first fairway when the round was suspended at 2:16 p.m. Hours later, as he looked toward more dark clouds to the north, he contemplated a marathon Sunday.

"It will be easier," Cabrera said. "There is justice."

Romero made it look easier even before the storm clouds gathered. The PGA helped slightly by pouring extra water on the greens overnight and trimming some of the rough in the landing areas.

But the 27-year-old Argentine did his part.

Romero first showed his explosive style last year at Carnoustie, where he made 10 birdies in 16 holes during the final round of the British Open and finished one shot out of a playoff. He was firing away at Oakland Hills, hitting a 3-iron to 6 feet on the par-3 ninth and making his final birdie with an 8-iron to 6 feet from a scary pin on the 16th.

"I played an excellent round," Romero said through his interpreter, Marcos Virasoro. "Almost perfect. Yesterday, I finished very mad with my round and now after this 18 holes, I can't believe it. I will have a chance for tomorrow. I have to wait, but it's great to be here."

AP

Andres Romero, of Argentina, follows his drive on the 18th hole as playing partner Chris DiMarco, right, looks on during the third round of the 90th PGA Championship golf tournament Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008 at Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield Township, Mich.

He was at 2-over 212, and had no idea just how long he would have to wait to see where it stacked up.

The good news? He can get some rest. The third round was to resume at 7:15 a.m. Sunday with six players facing 36 holes, while Romero won't have to show up until noon and play only 18.

The last major champion to play 36 holes on the final day was Peter Thomson in the 1965 British Open. Tiger Woods played 27 holes on Sunday when he won the rain-delayed Masters in 2005.

Romero was among 25 players from the 73-man field who completed their rounds Saturday.

Camilo Villegas of Colombia—maybe they should call this course "El Monstro" this week—was at 4 under for the day through 14 holes and was 2 over for the tournament. Another shot behind were Prayad Marksaeng of Thailand, who was 3 under for his round and in the bunker next to the 18th green; and Graeme McDowell of Northern Ireland, who also was 3 under for the day through 16 holes.

Steve Flesch was doing the best in his All-Lefty pairing with Phil Mickelson. Flesch, who had a chance at the Masters this year, rolled in a 20-foot putt and was 2 under for his round - 1 over for the tournament - through five holes.

Mickelson was at 3 over, but had an 8-foot eagle putt on No. 6 when play was stopped.

Sergio Garcia, still considered a big favorite as cleanly as he hits the ball, made par on the first hole and faces 35 more on Sunday.

"I guess the course is going to change quite a bit," Garcia said. "It's still going to be playing difficult, but probably not to the extreme it was playing the last couple of days."

Romero was amazed to even have a chance. After completing a 69 in the first round on Friday morning, he lost his composure later in the second round when his 8-iron to the 16th spun down a slope into the water, and his subsequent lob wedge from the drop area did the same thing. He wound up with a quadruple-bogey 8, and he lost his composure.

"I couldn't come back after that 8," Romero said. "I made a double bogey at the 18th because I was so mad. I was almost fighting for the lead, and suddenly I was trying to make the cut. So I was going mad the rest of the whole round."

During his blazing birdie run at Carnoustie, he made two double bogeys on the back nine and kept his cool. What was the difference?

"Those were bad shots," he said.

As he was discussing his birdies and bogeys, this is how Romero described losing a shot on the par-3 third Saturday.

"The approach wasn't that good," he said. "But I didn't get mad. That was good."

Rain began pelting the press tent as he spoke, causing him to look up and smile. Someone asked if the thunder was a sign that the golfing gods were angry at someone shooting 65 on The Monster.

Romero simply smiled and walked back to the clubhouse for lunch.

Kansas' Self signs huge new contract

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Bill Self, the Kansas basketball coach who guided the Jayhawks to their first NCAA championship in 20 years, signed a 10-year, $30 million contract Wednesday.

The new deal had been in the works since April, when Self's Jayhawks came from nine points down in the final minutes to beat Memphis in a thrilling title game and he subsequently turned down an offer to return to Oklahoma State, his alma mater.

Kansas and Self said in April he had agreed to the deal while the details were worked on. Self also said Kansas had agreed to big raises for his staff and to make improvements on the school's basketball facilities. Kansas this summer opened a $31 million new football complex.

Self's prior contract had three years remaining, but the new deal is retroactive to April 1, 2008.

Hawks match Grizzlies' offer sheet for Josh Smith

ATLANTA (AP)—Josh Smith will remain with the Hawks after Atlanta quickly matched an offer sheet from the Memphis Grizzlies on Friday.

"Tonight, the Hawks organization received an offer sheet from the Memphis Grizzlies for Josh Smith," Atlanta general manager Rick Sund said in a statement. "We are happy to announce that we will match their offer sheet.

"Ownership, management and the team are happy to have Josh return as a member of the Hawks."

Terms were not immediately disclosed.

The Grizzlies announced earlier in the day that Smith, a restricted free agent, had signed the offer sheet. The Hawks had seven days to match the offer.

The Hawks drafted the 6-foot-9, 235-pound Smith out of high school in the first round in 2004.

Smith averaged 17.2 points, 8.2 rebounds and 2.8 blocks in helping the Hawks make the playoffs last season.

Favre to start Saturday against Washington

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. (AP)—Brett Favre got a standing ovation from an overflow crowd that went to great lengths to get a good look at the New York Jets' newest quarterback Saturday. He was cheered again when he completed his first pass of practice.

Those delirious fans won't have to wait long to see him in action against another team.

Jets coach Eric Mangini said Favre will start next Saturday against the Redskins in the team's preseason home opener. If Favre's first practice was any indication, get ready for a frenzied atmosphere for a largely meaningless game.

More than 7,000 fans packed the club's practice facility in Long Island to catch a glimpse of the iconic QB in his first appearance on a field with New York. Favre was acquired from Green Bay late Wednesday night, sending a jolt through the franchise and the rest of the NFL.

Favre sounded ready to move past the hype and get back to work on the field.

"The pressure is just building," he said Friday. "The attention I've gotten since I've been here has been overwhelming. The bottom line, as we all know, is to win games. That's what I'm here to do."

The Jets sent a conditional draft pick to the Packers for Favre, who joined his new team on the sidelines during a 24-20 preseason-opening victory at Cleveland on Thursday night.

"Time will tell, but I don't want to say be patient," Favre said during a City Hall news conference with the mayor. "I have to get a lot done in a short amount of time. They wouldn't have signed me if they didn't think I could do that."

Favre closed a summer of discontent and opened a new chapter in his storied career by joining the Jets, who outbid the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He's also coming off one of his most productive seasons, passing for 4,155 yards, his most since 1998, with 28 TDs and 15 interceptions.

Chad Pennington and Kellen Clemens had been competing for the starting job before the Jets acquired the three-time league MVP. Pennington was released and signed by Miami on Friday, and Clemens was relegated to backup duty.

"It's a change," Clemens said. "One minute, you're in a quarterback battle and the next minute, it's completely different. There are two ways to look at this. You can get down about it or turn it into a positive. I get to pick the brain of a future Hall of Famer. That chance doesn't come along too often."

Favre began his first day in New York as the Jets' quarterback with an introduction to the city by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The mayor showered him with a number of gifts designed to ease his transition to New York, including cheesecakes, a MetroCard with $4 on it and a huge Broadway street sign.

"The legendary No. 4 has now become Jet Favre," Bloomberg said, "and we're delighted to welcome him to City Hall."

Five months after a tearful retirement, Favre, who won a Super Bowl title and set all sorts of records before his acrimonious split with the Packers, is starting over. His new teammates are glad he is.

"There have been smiling faces around here all day," said Jets tight end Bubba Franks, who played eight seasons with Favre in Green Bay. "It is good to have him here. When you play with a legend, you can't help but feed off of it. I think he'll fit right in with both the team and the city."

Favre is now part of a rebuilding Jets team which has been reduced to second-stringer status in New York behind the Super Bowl champion Giants.

"Hopefully I can bring as much excitement throughout the year," Favre said, "as we've had the last two or three days."

The 38-year-old Favre, who joked that his daughter asked if he was joining a college team because all the other players look much younger, won't commit to playing for the Jets beyond this season.

"Let's enjoy this year," he said. "The future is now. I don't have 17 more years to play, I don't think. I want to give the New York Jets and the people of this city the best year possible. Believe me."

China women gymnasts take overall lead, US second

BEIJING (AP)—China issued the challenge, and the short-handed U.S. women couldn't answer on Sunday.

Now on to the showdown in the gymnastics team final at the Beijing Olympics, where every element truly counts.

Neither powerhouse was at its absolute best, and the Americans were severely handicapped after Samantha Peszek sprained her left ankle in warm-ups. On floor, vault and balance beam, the Americans could put up only four gymnasts—meaning they had no room for error.

Peszek and Chellsie Memmel did one event each, the uneven bars, and neither performed particularly well. Memmel even fell.

So despite the excellence of world champ Shawn Johnson, who drew the only chants of "USA, USA" with her balance beam routine, the United States trailed the hosts by 1.475 points.

"There somewhat is relief the day is over. We overcame so much, it was all kind of a whirlwind," Johnson said. "And we got the nerves out and the mistakes out."

Johnson and Nastia Liukin were 1-2 in the all-around halfway through the day's qualifications, which should stand up.

"I knew things were happening I couldn't control and that were obviously not very good," Johnson said. "So I couldn't let it affect me."

But Peszek's injury—her status for Wednesday's team final is uncertain—had to take a toll on the Americans. It meant they basically were going 4-on-6 against the Chinese on Sunday.

"It was a little bit hard to go out from there," Liukin said. "A few of us had tears in our eyes because we know how badly she wanted to be out there. We said let's do it for her, let's do it for our families, let's do it for the people back home."

With the slates wiped clean for team finals, the Americans aren't in a mathematical hole.

"We'll come back strongly in the team finals and fight for it." Johnson promised.

China won the first subdivision, although most of the passion came from the audience. The Chinese women almost stoically went about their business: setting the bar high, then watching the world champion Americans fall short of it.

Give the U.S. team some slack, though, because Johnson, Liukin, Alicia Sacramone and Bridget Sloan had to carry most of the load. They were able to beat China's score in vault, but were hurt when Liukin fell on the landing in her specialty, uneven bars—and her father-coach, Valeri, a 1988 double gold medalist for the Soviet Union, leaped off the side of the podium in frustration.

"I wanted to make my dismount so bad," Liukin said. "I've been doing it so well in training. I think I just pulled so hard and I overrotated."

Still, to surpass the Chinese on Wednesday without a full team will be extremely difficult. Then again, look how close they came despite five major mistakes.

Maybe by then, China's women will show the kind of emotion their fans displayed Sunday morning.

Oh, there was a hint of a smile here and there, particularly from Deng Linlin following a precise vault. And He Kexin, the subject of age-eligibility questions before the games—is she really 16, or too young to be competing - wiped away tears after falling from uneven bars.

But while the fans at a sold-out National Indoor Stadium cheered every move the Chinese made, the women mainly treated it as another day at the office.

In sweeping all four apparatus, the Chinese posted 248.275 points, far ahead of Romania's 238.425. The hosts, some of whom don't look old enough to be in high school, despite some sloppiness, gave the U.S. athletes a little too much to match.

"Today's performance was about 70 percent," China coach Lu Shanzhen said through an interpreter. "I am very satisfied with the Chinese girls' performance. If I can give them a score, I would say 70 percent, mainly for He Kexin falling off the uneven bars. It's a big pity for her."

The fans fell nearly silent when their favorites went on uneven bars, with only the high-pitched shouts of encouragement from the other team members piercing the air. That was in direct contrast to the rollicking atmosphere when Cheng Fei and company were rocking it on floor.

And there was a huge gasp when He fell. She got back onto the bars, though, and received a charitable 15.725.

"Maybe she was nervous because she wanted to perform her best," Cheng said of her teammate. Overall, China's Yang Yilin led teammate Jiang Yuyuan in the all-around standings.

As they left the arena, the Chinese women finally loosened up, smiling and waving.

White Sox lose game, division lead and pitcher as Red Sox win 6-2

CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago White Sox lost their leadership of the American League's Central division, lost the game to the Boston Red Sox 6-2, and lost pitcher Jose Contreras to a likely season-ending injury in a triple blow Saturday.

The White Sox fell half a game behind new Central leader Minnesota.

Boston pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka threw his longest outing of the season, giving up only four hits in eight innings.

David Ortiz hit a three-run double to provide the requisite runs for the Red Sox, who hold the wildcard slot and stayed 3-1/2 games behind East division leader Tampa Bay.

The White Sox's already-low pitching depth became even shallower in the second inning when Contreras left the game with an Achilles' tendon injury.

AP

Boston Red Sox's Dustin Pedroia, right, celebrates with teammate Kevin Youkilis after scoring on a three-run double by David Ortiz against the Chicago White Sox during the seventh inning of a baseball game Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008, in Chicago.

Angels 11, Yankees 4

In Anaheim, California, Los Angeles piled on an extraordinary eight runs in the eighth inning to rout New York.

The Angels moved 14 games clear atop the West division and improved to a season-high 30 games over .500.

Los Angeles slugger Vladimir Guerrero led off the eighth by hitting the first pitch over the right-field wall for his 21st homer of the season and a 4-3 lead.

Three more homers followed for the Angels, who have scored 30 runs in winning three straight.

Twins 7, Royals 3

In Kansas City, Missouri, Minnesota moved top of the Central division by beating Kansas City.

Twins starter Francisco Liriano had his second straight strong start since being recalled from the Rochester Red Wings, allowing only three runs with five strikeouts for an ERA of 2.31 over those two starts.

Minnesota's Delmon Young hit a two-run homer in the second inning.

Indians 4, Blue Jays 2

In Toronto, Cleveland starter Paul Byrd won his fourth consecutive start to guide Cleveland past Toronto.

Byrd threw his first complete game in almost a year, without walking a single batter.

Ryan Garko drove in two runs for the Indians. Pulled for failing to run out hard to base on a groundball in Wednesday's game, Garko doubled home a run in the fourth and had an RBI single in Cleveland's three-run sixth.

Tigers 10, Athletics 2

In Detroit, Miguel Cabrera homered twice and drove in four runs as Detroit hammered Oakland.

Oakland has lost 11 of 12.

Orioles 9, Rangers 0

In Baltimore, the home team shut down Texas to record back-to-back easy wins over the Rangers.

Orioles starter Daniel Cabrera stymied struggling Texas for six innings, allowing only four hits.

Rays 8, Mariners 7, 11 innings

In Seattle, Tampa Bay edged Seattle to retain its buffer atop the East division and match its franchise wins record.

Dioner Navarro hit a sacrifice fly to score Ben Zobrist in the 11th inning after the Rays had been behind 5-0. Zobrist was walked to start the inning, stole second and advanced to third on a groundout before coming home of Navarro's fly.

Mets 8, Marlins 6

In New York, the New York Mets posted a vital 8-6 win over Florida on Saturday to move 2-1/2 games clear of their National League East rival.

Carlos Delgado hit a mammoth home run and Daniel Murphy added the first of his big league career for New York, which stayed just one game off East leader Philadelphia.

Cardinals 12, Cubs 3

In Chicago, St. Louis pummeled Chicago to douse the Cubs' hot home record.

The result cut Chicago's lead in the Central division back to four games.

St. Louis slugger Troy Glaus—hitless in his first 30 at-bats against the Cubs this season—had two of the four homers off Chicago ace Carlos Zambrano and finished with five RBIs.

Zambrano lasted just 4 1-3 innings, giving up nine run. The four homers he allowed were the most in his career, while the nine runs tied his personal worst.

Braves 11, Diamondbacks 4

In Phoenix, Arizona lost its fourth straight game, beaten by Atlanta.

The Diamondbacks only retained top spot by half a game in the West division thanks to Los Angeles' extra-inning loss in San Francisco.

Giants 3, Dodgers 2, 10 innings

In San Francisco, the home side came through with two runs in the bottom of the tenth to snatch a win that deprived Los Angeles leadership of the West division.

Aaron Rowand hit an RBI single through a drawn-in infield to clinch the win, played in front of former Giants slugger Barry Bonds, on hand for a ceremony honoring the club's 50th anniversary in San Francisco.

Phillies 4, Pirates 2

In Philadelphia, the home side ended a long scoring drought to beat Pittsburgh and retain the lead in the East division.

The Phillies wasted no time ending a 23-inning runless streak, getting their first run on the board before a single out.

Padres 8, Rockies 3

In Denver, Adrian Gonzalez hit his 28th homer of the season as San Diego downed Colorado.

Veteran Padres starter Greg Maddux improved to 8-2 lifetime at hitter-friendly Coors Field, allowing four hits in six innings—all but one of them were wiped out by subsequent double plays.

Colorado starter Aaron Cook normally masters San Diego, but gave up 10 hits in losing successive starts.

Brewers 6, Nationals 0

In Milwaukee, home pitcher Ben Sheets notched his first win in over a month to beat struggling Washington.

Sheets tied teammate C.C. Sabathia for the NL lead in complete games with four and extended the Nationals' scoreless streak to 22 innings.

The Brewers hold the wildcard slot but also moved to within four games of Central division leader Chicago.

Astros 3, Reds 1

In Cincinnati, the home team slumped to its fifth straight defeat by losing to Houston.

Astros starter Brian Moehler had a banner game against his old club, pitching seven solid innings, as well as hitting a double and scoring.

Moehler, who played for the Reds in 2002, fell just one out short of a complete game against Cincinnati in late July and followed that up Saturday by pitching six shutout innings before allowing a run in the seventh.

Air21 evens series with 34-point blowout

ANTIPOLO, Philippines—True to their vow, the Air21 Express exacted revenge Friday night. And it was huge.

"That was a challenge and the boys responded pretty well," said coach Bo Perasol moments after his troops got even with the Barangay Ginebra Kings, tying the 2008 Smart PBA Fiesta Conference best-of-seven series after two games.

The Express made a big comeback from a nine-point defeat in the series opener, playing aggressively throughout to end the Kings' amazing streak with a king-sized 124-90 win in Game Two at the Ynares Center here.

Dominated in Game 1, the Express returned the compliment, even besting the Kings' performance Wednesday.

Unrelenting, Air21 outscored Ginebra on all quarters in dealing the Kings their first defeat in their last 14 games.

The Express sat on a 13-point cushion at the turn and started the final half with a 14-to-nothing run to settle the outcome of the game early much to the disappointment of the predominant Ginebra crowd anticipating the Kings to keep their unbeaten run in the post-elims play.

The Bert Lina Group franchise instead tied the series at 1-1. The two teams dispute the 2-1 lead as the series returns to the Big Dome for Game Three Sunday. ***(www.pba.com.ph)***

RECORD

From Page 28

struggled for 30 minutes before landing a marlin that tipped the scales at the Smiling Cove Marine weighing station at 484 lbs.

"It was perfect. We used the same baits that we've been producing for a couple of years. It just happened. We took a gamble and it worked. We went far, very far," said the lawmaker who later admitted that he and his crew set a course 70 miles off shore to catch the monster marlin.

"It gave us a little bit of problem because we were a bit underhanded today. It took us about 30 minutes. Normally it takes us 15 minutes to land a marlin," he added.

Despite the fish's size, Hofshneider said it was not the biggest fish he has caught and categorized the 484-pounder Saturday as medium-sized.

Hofshneider was joined in the boat by Patrick Diaz, Louie Manibusan, and his brother, Conrad.

Coming in second and third in the billfish category Saturday were *Cha Cha II* (277.5 lbs) and *CM-345-CP* (265 lbs.).

In the yellow fin division, *The Marianas* is in pole position with its 49.1-lb. catch, followed by the St. Jude, which netted a 48.3- and 44.4-pounder in Day 1.

Emmanuel has the mahi-mahi to beat after coming in with one that weighed 19.5 lbs., followed by *Skip Jack* (6.8 lbs.) and *Foxy Myrna* (4.25 lbs.).

The skip jack category has the 21.65-lb. fish caught by the Zeppelin in front with *DJ Fish Mobile* and *Saina* in second and third with catches of 20.4 lbs. and 20.15 lbs respectively.

Day 2 of the 24th Annual Saipan International Fishing Derby was held yesterday, but results were still not available as of press time. A total of 52 boats from Saipan, Tinian, and Guam took part in the yearly event.

ONE

From Page 28

This race had been considered to be Phelps' toughest test, but the American swimmer looked impressive all the way. Laszlo Cseh of Hungary took the silver in 4:06.16, while Ryan Lochte of the United States faded to third in 4:08.09—more than 4 seconds behind.

The only glitch came during the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which cut off a few seconds before the end.

There were 14 gold medals to be won Sunday, but most eyes were on the four main events in the pool—at least until Chinese superstar Yao Ming plays later in the day against the United States in men's basketball.

Stephanie Rice of Australia won the women's 400 IM in a world record time of 4:29.45. Kirsty Coventry of Zimbabwe was second in 4:29.89, and Katie Hoff of the United States took bronze in 4:31.71.

"I sort of turned around and thought I saw 4:31 and I was thinking, 'That hurt a lot for a 4:31,'" Rice said. "But when I walked over and saw the 4:29, I thought, 'That's amazing.'"

Park Tae-hwan of South Korea won the men's 400 freestyle, snapping Australia's dominance of the event at the Olympics.

Park, the current world champion, finished in 3:41.86. Zhang Lin of China earned his country's first swimming medal of the games, claiming silver in 3:42.78, and Larsen Jensen of the United States took the bronze in 3:42.78.

In the women's 4x100 relay, the Netherlands won gold in 3:33.76, edging the United States and Australia.

The start of the Olympic tennis tournament was delayed by rain and began about 2□ hours late. Roger Federer and sisters Venus and Serena Williams were scheduled to play later.

"I think the blue skies will come, especially after today's rain. I have my fingers crossed," organizing committee spokesman Wang Wei said. "Despite all this, the air quality continues to remain in the satisfactory range and does not pose any threat to the athletes."

More gold medals will be awarded Sunday in archery, cycling, synchronized diving, fencing, judo, shooting and weightlifting.

Yao, who plays for the Houston Rockets, is China's greatest athletic superstar, but United States coach Mike Krzyzewski is prepared.

"He's not going to score 100 points, and we hope to come close to scoring 100 points," Krzyzewski said. "I think you have to make sure that he doesn't dominate the game."

The United States, which includes Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, may be the favorite, but defending champion Argentina, world champion Spain and European champion Russia are also medal contenders.

Argentina faces Lithuania on Sunday, while Spain is playing 2005 European champion Greece and Russia is taking on Iran.

The U.S.-China match, however, is likely to be the marquee event of the day.

ELI

From Page 28

Torgeson got the July Male Athlete of the Month plum after topping the 6th Annual OREXTERRA off-road race held last July 27.

According to the Northern Mariana Islands Triathlon Association, Torgeson started the grueling race by tackling the 750-meter swim then survived the treacherous 15-km mountain bike course, before successfully negotiating the rugged three-km trail run.

"Eli topped several strong endurance athletes to claim his first OREXTERRA championship," a portion of the nomination read.

NMITF said the Commonwealth Health Center anesthesiologist has been dominating all matters of races—on two feet or on two wheels—since arriving on Saipan.

Shimizu, for her part, took home the July Female Athlete of the Month award after completing the 28th Kaike Triathlon staging held last July 20 in Tottori Prefecture, Yonago City in Kaike, Japan.

Along with Tinian transplant Ken Halliday, Shimizu made history when they became the first participants from the CNMI to complete 3-kilometer swim, 145-km bike, and 42.195-km run triathlon.

Shimizu crossed the finish line in 10:42:32, which was 103rd overall and seventh among women participants.

The veteran triathlete, who finished second to Renata Bucher in the 2008 Tagaman Triathlon, finished the exhausting swim in 54:18, negotiated the challenging bike course in 5:17:13, and then battled the marathon in 4:31:01.

Arriola, meanwhile, won the Male Student Athlete of the Month for July after the CNMI goalie in the 2008 East Asian Football Federation Under-14 Youth Football Festival in Guam impressed opposing players and their coaches.

According to the nomination from the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, Arriola was applauded by other officials of the tournament and other teams' coaches when he came off the field against teams of Chinese-Taipei, Guam, Hong Kong, North Korea, and Macao.

"He improved every game and proved to be the most respected individuals on and off the field representing the CNMI U14 National Team," part of the nomination read.

Bowling (Raphael Zapanta) and swimming (Rezne Wong, Kensuke Kimura, and Grace Kimball) also nominated their respective athletes for the monthly awards.

ROCK

From Page 28

While Camacho was wheeling and dealing from the plate, D-9ers pitcher Derik Babauta was getting pelted aplenty by Rock Steady's hitters.

After giving up only two runs in the first three innings, Babauta allowed four players to cross home plate in the fourth, as the deficit ballooned to 0-6.

It was 9-0 after 4 1/2 innings and San Roque was in trouble of losing via 10-run mercy rule, but fortunately or unfortunately for the D-9ers, Lizama's outburst saved them the misery and kept Rock Steady on course to a perfect season.

SML commissioner Tony Rogologoi said Lizama's antics was not left unnoticed by the board.

"With respect to the incident in the first game that resulted in an ejection of a player, the SML will meet to decide on what sanctions to take," he said.

In the second game, Tanapag kissed its back-to-back championship aspirations goodbye after losing to pennant runner-up 13-5.

In a continuation of their July 31 match-up that interrupted by power outage, Rangers ace Craig Sanchez settled down after surrendering a two-run double to Falcons' Manny Evangelista at the start of the reset.

Sanchez bounced back in spectacular fashion by blanking the Falcons the rest of the way. In fact, so efficient was Sanchez from the mound that he retired the 15 batters he faced after the fifth inning in consecutive order to earn the win.

The Joeten Motors Corp.-sponsored team scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth courtesy of three hits and a double by Benwachi Taisakan, a sacrifice fly by J.P. Sablan, and two wild pitches.

Designated hitter Mel Sakisat led the Rangers with a 2-for-5 performance from the plate, scoring three runs, and driving in three runs as well. Teammate Clifton Silil went 2-for-5 with one run, while J.J. Laniyo went 2-for-4.

Game 1 of the best-of-five series between Rock Steady and the Ford Rangers start tonight at the Oleai Sports Complex.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	70	46	.603	–
Boston	67	50	.573	3 1/2
New York	63	54	.538	7 1/2
Toronto	59	58	.504	11 1/2
Baltimore	56	59	.487	13 1/2

Central Division

Minnesota	65	51	.560	–
Chicago	64	51	.557	1/2
Detroit	57	59	.491	8
Kansas City	53	64	.453	12 1/2
Cleveland	51	64	.443	13 1/2

West Division

Los Angeles	73	43	.629	–
Texas	60	58	.508	14
Oakland	54	62	.466	19
Seattle	45	72	.385	28 1/2

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Philadelphia	63	53	.543	–
New York	62	54	.534	1
Florida	61	56	.521	2 1/2
Atlanta	55	62	.470	8 1/2
Washington	44	73	.376	19 1/2

Central Division

Chicago	70	47	.598	–
Milwaukee	66	51	.564	4
St. Louis	65	54	.546	6
Houston	57	59	.491	12 1/2
Pittsburgh	53	63	.457	16 1/2
Cincinnati	52	66	.441	18 1/2

West Division

Arizona	59	58	.504	–
Los Angeles	58	58	.500	1/2
Colorado	53	66	.445	7
San Francisco	49	66	.426	9
San Diego	45	72	.385	14

Yesterday's Games

Cleveland 4, Toronto 2
L.A. Angels 11, N.Y. Yankees 4
Detroit 10, Oakland 2
Baltimore 9, Texas 0
Boston 6, Chicago White Sox 2
Minnesota 7, Kansas City 3
Tampa Bay 8, Seattle 7, 11 innings
St. Louis 12, Chicago Cubs 3
Milwaukee 6, Washington 0
Philadelphia 4, Pittsburgh 2
N.Y. Mets 8, Florida 6
Houston 3, Cincinnati 1
San Diego 8, Colorado 3
Atlanta 11, Arizona 4
San Francisco 3, L.A. Dodgers 2, 10 inning

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, Michigan (AP)–Scores Saturday from the U.S. PGA Championship at the par-70, 7,395-yard Oakland Hills Golf Club course:

PARTIAL THIRD ROUND

Andres Romero	69-78-65	212
Jim Furyk	71-77-70	218
John Merrick	73-75-70	218
Mike Weir	73-75-71	219
Chris DiMarco	75-72-72	219
Rocco Mediate	73-74-72	219
Robert Allenby	76-72-72	220
John Senden	76-72-72	220
Charl Schwartzel	77-70-73	220
Tim Clark	76-72-73	221
Corey Pavin	75-73-73	221
Geoff Ogilvy	73-74-74	221
Peter Lonard	74-74-74	222
James Kingston	72-76-74	222
Billy Mayfair	69-78-75	222
Steve Marino	73-74-75	222
Hiroyuki Fujita	77-70-76	223
Mark Calcavecchia	71-76-76	223
Paul Azinger	72-76-76	224
John Mallinger	72-75-77	224
Charles Howell III	72-76-77	225
Bubba Watson	75-73-77	225
Chez Reavie	78-70-78	226
Richard Green	71-77-79	227
Louis Oosthuizen	76-72-81	229

Did Not Finish

J.B. Holmes	71-68	139
Charlie Wi	70-70	140
Ben Curtis	73-67	140
Justin Rose	73-67	140
David Toms	72-69	141
Henrik Stenson	71-70	141
Angel Cabrera	70-72	142
Brandt Snedeker	71-71	142
Jeev Milkha Singh	68-74	142
Aaron Baddeley	71-71	142
Sergio Garcia	69-73	142
Ken Duke	69-73	142
Sean O'Hair	69-73	142
Nicholas Thompson	71-72	143
Briny Baird	71-72	143
Paul Goydos	74-69	143
D.J. Trahan	72-71	143
Boo Weekley	72-71	143
Phil Mickelson	70-73	143
Steve Flesch	73-70	143
Brian Gay	70-74	144
Tom Lehman	74-70	144
Michael Campbell	73-71	144
Steve Elkington	71-73	144
Peter Hanson	71-73	144
Michael Allen	70-75	145
Padraig Harrington	71-74	145
Rory Sabbatini	72-73	145
Ian Poulter	74-71	145
Alastair Forsyth	73-72	145
Robert Karlsson	68-77	145
Carl Pettersson	71-74	145
Anthony Kim	70-75	145
Justin Leonard	74-71	145
Fredrik Jacobson	75-71	146
Stuart Appleby	76-70	146
Ernie Els	71-75	146
Retief Goosen	72-74	146
Dean Wilson	73-73	146
Mark Brown	77-69	146
Paul Casey	72-74	146
Pat Perez	73-73	146
Camilo Villegas	74-72	146
Steve Stricker	71-75	146
Graeme McDowell	74-72	146
Niclas Fasth	73-73	146
Prayad Marksaeng	76-70	146
Kevin Sutherland	76-71	147

Leaderboard

	SCORE	THRU
1. J.B. Holmes	-1	2nd Round
2. Ben Curtis	E	2nd Round
2. Justin Rose	E	2nd Round
2. Charlie Wi	E	2nd Round
5. Steve Flesch	+1	5
5. Henrik Stenson	+1	2nd Round
5. David Toms	+1	2nd Round
8. Andres Romero	+2	F
8. Camilo Villegas	+2	14
8. Boo Weekley	+2	4
8. Ken Duke	+2	1
8. Sergio Garcia	+2	1
8. Aaron Baddeley	+2	1
8. Jeev Milkha Singh	+2	1
8. Angel Cabrera	+2	2nd Round

2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS

Medal Count

	G	S	B	Total
USA	2	2	4	8
CHN	4	1	0	5
KOR	2	2	0	4
RUS	0	3	1	4
CZE	2	0	0	2
AUS	1	0	1	2
NED	1	0	1	2
ITA	0	2	0	2
ROU	1	0	0	1
ESP	1	0	0	1

Team effort behind women's exhibition victory

MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Women's All-Stars beat the all-men Multinational FC squad in the second half of their exhibition game held during the Saipan Cup 2008 last Aug. 3 at the Oleai Sports Complex.

After getting blanked by Onwell in the first 35 minutes of action, the Women's All-Stars—composed of regulars of the CNMI Women's National Football Team—did a Billie Jean King on the game Multinational FC team with Lindsay Davis finding the back of the net for the exhibition half's lone score.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Women's All-Stars in action against the Multinational FC in the second half of their exhibition game held during the Saipan Cup 2008 last Aug. 3 at the Oleai Sports Complex.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Women's All-Stars forward Brenda Schutlz goes one-on-one against a player from Multinational FC.

National team captain Brenda Schultz applauded Davis' goal but also congratulated the entire team for making it happen.

"Scoring goals against challenging teams is always very exciting. Lindsay did an excellent job staying onside, making a great run, calling for the ball, and then hitting the ball perfectly. It was a very exciting moment. And of course you can't make these moments happen without excellent support and playing from the midfielders, defenders, and goalkeeper. Our goalkeeper Maria Ornes did a great job blocking shots from those men, while Becca 'The Wall' Newman did a great job for us in midfield," she said.

Schultz also gave kudos to Multinational FC and all the men's teams that have allowed the women to play in their leagues and tournaments.

"The men have been so generous to let us play in their tournaments. The men's teams could all 'no show' to our games the way they are set up and yet they don't. I applaud them for being so progressive and welcoming to the women. It really helps the women improve as a team on the field which in turn will make us more competitive in international events," she said.

The Saipan International School teacher acknowledged that while winning an exhibition match—even if it's just a half—is one of the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association women's committee's most cherished dreams, the bigger more fulfilling one is to be invited in the men's league as a full-fledged entry.

"We appreciate their [men] hospitality very much. [But] We dream that one day we will be included as a regular team in the tournaments and be competitive. We want to keep growing and improving," she said.

2008 POJC kicks off today

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships gets going today with 57 youth netters representing the North, East, and West teams duking it out in four divisions—boys' 18, girls' 18, boys' 13, and girls' 13— in Lautoka, Fiji.

The CNMI has six players suiting up for the North Team in the five-day competition led by last year's boys' 18-under runner-up Ji Hoon Heo.

The 16-year-old Marianas High School student is expected to be the top seed in his age group, which also includes 11 of the region's top youth netters namely Lorenzo Pineda of Vanuatu (West), William O'Connell of Fiji (West), Duncan Maetoloa of Solomon Islands (West), Ian Honilla of Solomon Islands (West), Devashkar Reddy of Fiji (West), William Koo of Guam (North), Uere Katang of Kiribati (North), Prince Matuatia of Samoa (East), Joseph Meredith of Samoa (East), Eli Tukaroa of Cook Islands (East), and Chris Sami of American Samoa (East).

INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION
Sixteen-year-old Marianas High School student Ji Hoon Heo is expected to be the top seed in the boys' 18-under age group of the 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Lautoka, Fiji.

Mayuko Arriola and Dina Jones, meanwhile, banner the CNMI's best hopes in the girls' 18-under, where they will be joined by the North Team's Taakena Kaumai of Kiribati, Alyssa Hawkins of Federated States of Micronesia, and Alea Dugan of Guam.

The rest of the girls' 18-under field is made up of Marcia Tere-Apisah of Papua New Guinea (West), Zinnia Leamana of Solomon Islands (West), Adalyn Hazelman of Fiji (West), Rutha Alick of Vanuatu (West), Steffi Carruthers of Samoa (East), Litia Godinet of American Samoa (East), Leilani Duchnak of American Samoa (East), Kesaia Mu'amoholeva of Tonga (East), Amanda Korinihona of Solomon Islands (West), and Fiji's Losana Vosa and Priscilla Voasa (West).

Christian Miller and Rafael Jones, for their part, will join Cory Morrison of Guam and Bwataua Matang of Kiribati in the North Team in the boys' 13-under competition.

Others in the age group are Fiji's Devin Khatri, Geordie Daulaca, and Devrath Narayan (West), PNG's Robin Morove and John Martin Kaiulo (West), American Samoa's Christian Duchnak (East), Samoa's Xyril Posala (East), Cook Islands' Alex Beddoes (East), Tonga's Muller Afemui (East), and New Caledonia's Clement Coarraze and Tahiti's Karl Yomes.

Thea Minor is the CNMI's lone entry in the 13-under girls and her teammates in the North Team are Adrea Lai of Guam, Shawn Adams of FSM, and Laisa Onorio of Kiribati.

Fiji junior netters in the age group are Annie Shanon, Tarani Kamoe, and Tanya Guttersberger (West), while participants from Samoa are Aniva Hunkin and River Burich (East). Lorish Puluspene of PNG (West), Lorraine Bani of Vanuatu (West), Tayla Beddoes of Cook Islands (East), Simuko Afemui of Tonga (East), and Samuelle Bull of New Caledonia make up the rest of the field in the girls' 13-under.

USS Peleliu Club reviving pool

USS Peleliu Club, Saipan's most popular billiards venue, is hoping to revive the sport through a slew of weekly pool competitions.

USSP owner, Ken Phillips, said the Garapan watering hole and sports bar is organizing three different tournaments every week.

"Monday is for the 8-ball 'Pool Challenge,' with a $1 per game charge for challengers. Winners pocket the money and hold the table. This competition can be played with as few as five entrants," he said.

Phillips, meanwhile, said, Tuesday's competition features a single-elimination 9-ball tournament with a $5 entry fee.

"The first competitor to win three games advances in the bracket. 'A' players as determined by management, will have to win four games to advance," he said.

Last but not the least, Wednesday is reserved for the always in-demand double elimination 8-ball tournament.

"Players have at least two chances to advance for only $5," said Phillips, adding that the start time for all three weekly pool tournaments is at 8pm with happy hour prices for both players and spectators until 2pm.

In addition to the three pool tournaments, USSP has also changed its operating hours. "We're now opening at 8pm, with live music from 9pm to 2am Tuesday through Sunday," said Phillips.

He added that USSP is also looking for head-to-head competition with other establishments and bar owners can call him anytime after 7:30pm to discuss days, number of players, and other details.

For more information about USSP's Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday pool tournaments, contact Ken or Rose Phillips at 233-1984. ***(Mark Rabago)***

MARK RABAGO
Cue artist Jerry Soriano in action in this file photo from one of the weekly tournaments at the USS Peleliu Club.

Lack of submitted requirements imperil Rotary caging

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 2008 Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League is in danger of being scuttled even before it starts, as the failure of teams to seriously follow the deadlines for requirements has pushed back the start of the 18-under competition.

An obviously exasperated Rotary caging coordinator Elias Rangamar said instead of today's kick-off, the curtains for the Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League will have to be raised on Aug. 18.

"To date no team has completed any of the requirements—birth certificates, entry fees, rosters, etc. I have no other choice but to push back the league for another week and may consider canceling the league if the teams don't start getting their acts together," he said.

Rangamar, who is also the president of the Basketball Association of the Northern, already postponed the start of the 18-and-under basketball competition last week to give participating teams more time to complete their roster and raise their entry fees.

The 2008 Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League originally eyed an Aug. 4 start date.

Entrance fee for the Rotary league is $150 for the 15-18 division, while teams hoping to see action in the 14-and-under age group need only to fork over $100.

Division I (15-18) will be played Monday to Friday beginning Aug. 18, while Division II (12-14) will only play during weekends, according to Rangamar.

Rangamar added that uniforms—at least the top—are required for all teams wishing to take part in the 18-and-under competition.

For more inquiries about the Saipan Rotary Club Summer Youth Basketball League, contact Rangamar at 664-2502.

The defending champion for the 2008 Rotary league is the Rufino Aguon-coached CNMI Junior Nationals, which beat the Southern Sonics in their winner-take-all finals late last year in a score of 98-91.

Team effort behind women's exhibition victory

The Women's All-Stars beat the all-men Multinational FC squad in the second half of their exhibition game held during the Saipan Cup 2008 last Aug. 3 at the Oleai Sports Complex. 27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Storms stall PGA, but Romero ties course record

All it took was one record-tying round and several claps of thunder for Oakland Hills to finally look vulnerable Saturday in the PGA Championship. 24

Record wahoo, monster marlin in Day 1

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Day 1 of the 24th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament was a smash hit for anglers as the crew of *MV Gloria II* caught a record-breaking wahoo and defending champion *Cabo Express* of Rep. Heinz Hofshneider landed a 484-lb. marlin.

MV Gloria II, skippered by John Sablan and manned by Warren Villagomez and Ray Guerrero, has one arm wrapped around the championship trophy of the wahoo category after reeling in a 52.85-pounder.

Sablan said they caught the whopping wahoo 70 miles east of Tinian and that they specifically sought calm waters in search of this year's top prize.

24th Annual

"We're very happy we broke the record. I think that record has been there for so many years," said a lost for words Sablan in an interview with the *Saipan Tribune*.

Saipan Fishermen Association president Gene Weaver was more ecstatic than the *MV Gloria II*'s captain about Saturday's record-breaking wahoo.

"This wahoo here if it holds up after tomorrow, they got the record. It's one of the biggest wahoos I've seen caught in these waters. These guys will probably end up with about $1,000 just for catching that. That's our first place prize for that wahoo. Unfortunately, there are no incentives [for breaking the wahoo record] this year because times are kind of hard right now. We didn't get the yellow fin special prize also this year. Normally we have these incentives for these record-breaking fish," he said.

After *MV Gloria II*'s prized catch, *The Marianas*' 49.1-lb. wahoo and *Flame of Love*'s 30.63-pounder were second and third in the division after the first day of competition.

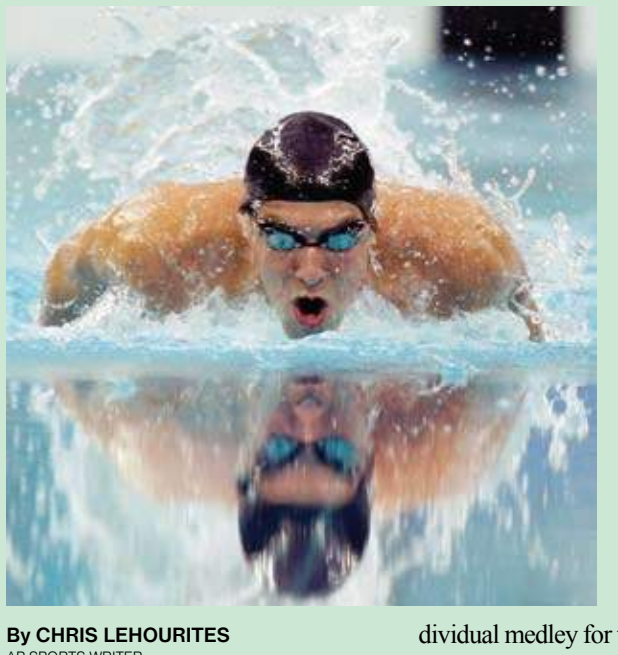
Hofshneider and his crew in the *Cabo Express*, for their part,

See RECORD on Page 26

MARK RABAGO

Capt. John Sablan and the crew of *MV Gloria II* pose with supporters and family beside the 52.85-lb. record-breaking wahoo they caught in Day 1 of the 24th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

One down, seven to go for Phelps in Beijing



United States' Michael Phelps swims to setting a new world record and winning the gold in the final of the men's 400-meter individual medley during the swimming competitions in the National Aquatics Center at the Beijing 2008 Olympics in Beijing, Sunday, Aug. 10, 2008.

AP

By CHRIS LEHOURITES
AP SPORTS WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—Michael Phelps jumped off the starting blocks and started his race to history Sunday, winning the 400-meter individual medley for the first of his possible eight gold medals.

The American swimmer won the race in style, setting a world record of 4 minutes, 3.84 seconds.

"That was a pretty emotional race," Phelps said. "I knew it was going to be a tough race all the way through."

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RELATED NEWS
China women gymnasts take overall lead, US second. PAGE 25

Eli, Maimi, Caleb are July's best for NMASA

By MARK RABAGO
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ATHLETES of the MONTH

Eli Torgeson and Maimi Shimizu of triathlon and Caleb Arriola of soccer were named Athlete of the Month awardees for July by the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association during its meeting Thursday.

See ELI on Page 26

Shimizu

Arriola

Torgeson

Rock Steady, Rangers advanced to BSML finals

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Budweiser SAIPAN MAJOR LEAGUE C.N.M.I.

Rock Steady continued its unbeaten streak, while Ford Rangers dethroned Tanapag Falcons to arrange a best-of-five series for the 2008 Budweiser Saipan Major League.

With the 2008 season seeing its first weekend morning game at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field last Saturday, Rock Steady defeated the San Roque D-9ers, 9-0, in controversial fashion in the first game when D-9ers third baseman Bob Lizama was thrown out of the game for excessive arguing with the umpires.

And with his ouster reducing the San Roque team's lineup to eight, officials had no recourse but to call the game in Rock Steady's favor via 9-0 forfeit.

MARK RABAGO

Ford Rangers ace Craig Sanchez retired the 15 batters he faced after the fifth inning in consecutive order to earn the win in Game 3 against the Tanapag Falcons.

The controversial ending marred an otherwise fine outing by Rock Steady pitcher Jonathan Camacho, who went all five innings without giving up a run and only allowed six hits.

Second baseman Dane Lizama also had a good game, batting in two runs despite going only 1-for-3. Other contributors were Roy Celis and Tyrone Omar, who accounted for an RBI each, and Nick San Nicolas who went 3-for-3, including a double in the second inning.

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